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Marxism Today

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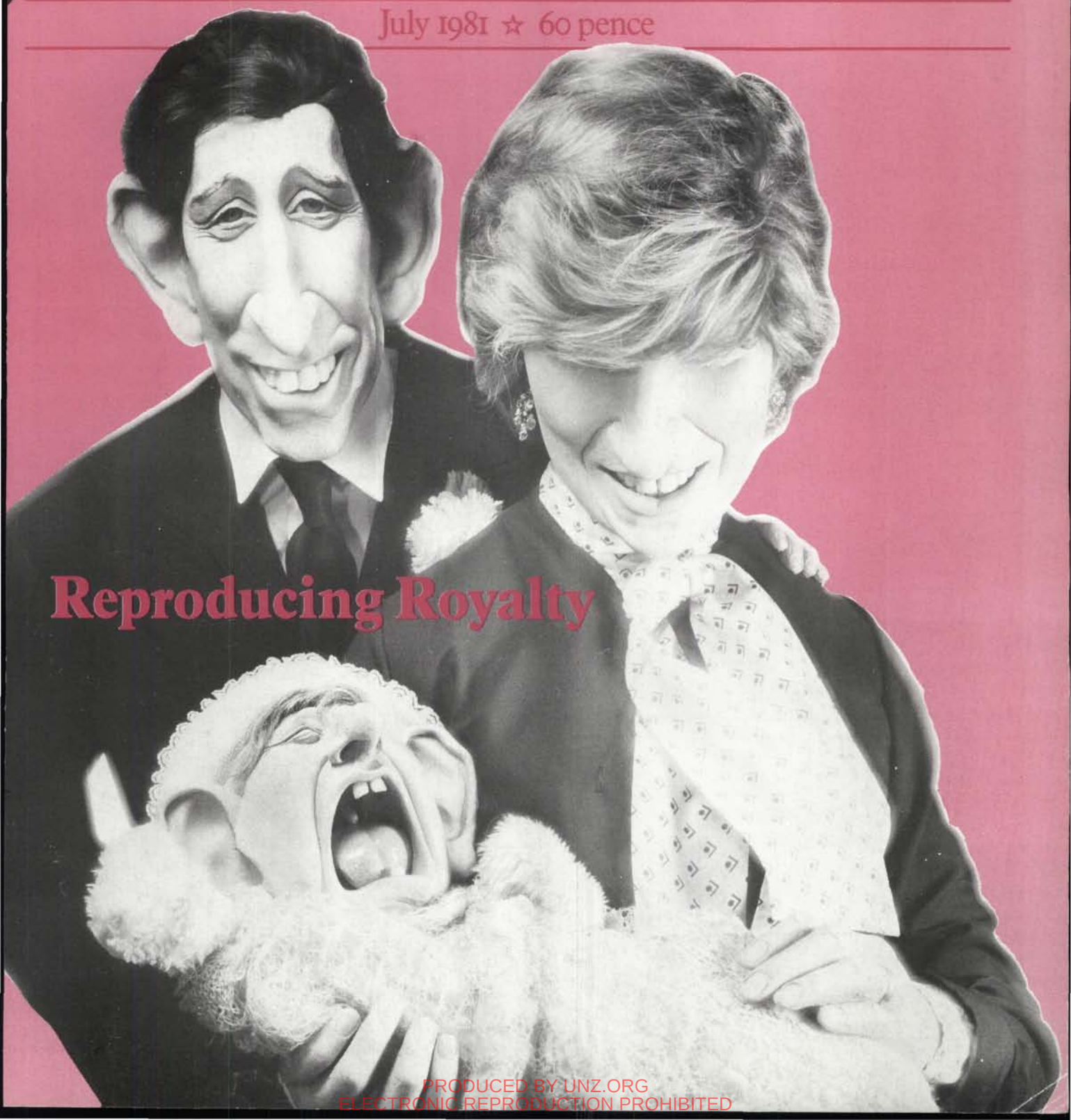

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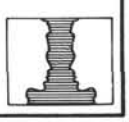

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FOCUS

THE POUND

The Conservative government has recently encountered its first sterling crisis. In the course of one week in early June the pound fell dramatically on the foreign exchanges as funds were transferred into other currencies (principally the US dollar). Since such sharp movements in the past have sometimes caused an unholy scramble to get out of a currency (eg, the pound in 1976, the dollar in 1978), official circles have been watching the situation a little anxiously.

In truth, the drop in sterling has so far been modest. It has been exaggerated by the tendency of financial journalists to focus on the sterling-dollar exchange rate, which in this instance has moved further than any other. In mid-June £1 could buy $1.95, about 20% less than in January. But the depreciation against the Japanese yen has been less than 10%, and against EEC currencies it has been so small as to be almost unnoticeable. The Bank of England's effective exchange rate index (an average of sterling rates against a large number of currencies, weighted by their share of UK trade) in mid-June was 7% below its January peak, 4% below its April level — and stood at the same value as in June 1980. Effectively, the recent depreciation of sterling has done no more than to cancel out the appreciation which took place in the second half of last year. Since this was just the last stage of an appreciation which has been going on since before the Conservatives were elected, and during that time the UK inflation rate has if anything been above the average of its major trading partners, this depreciation is so far rather a minor event. Moreover, it could be reversed if foreign interest rates fall. However, it will nudge up the inflation rate by increasing import prices.

So the pound remains a fundamentally strong currency. The manufacturing sector will continue to find it hard to compete in world markets. This is reflected in the Treasury's forecast (made at the time of the Budget) of a 5½% drop in export volume in 1981, and in the continuing pessimism of most other forecasting organisations. Mrs Thatcher is fond of attributing the strength of the pound to the fact that it is a 'petro-currency'. This contains a certain amount of truth, but makes no allowances for the effects of an extremely restrictive economic policy. Deflation has cut back imports, whilst strenuous efforts to control the money supply have pushed up interest rates, making Britain an attractive haven for short term capital. In addition, the money markets have been seduced by the vociferous monetarism of Mrs Thatcher into believing that sterling will remain a strong currency. All these factors together have produced a steady rise in sterling from early 1979 until the beginning of this year.

The Budget cut of 2% in Minimum Lending Rate was intended to counteract this and bring some relief to industry. The 3% fall in the effective exchange rate from January to April can be attributed to this move, which was widely canvassed in advance. It is possible that the further fall in June represents a recognition that sterling has risen too high, and that once the economy has fully adjusted to the new level the balance of payments figures would show a significant deficit. It is more likely, however, that it is a response to the tremendous rise in US interest rates, as President Reagan tries to implement a monetarist strategy similar to Mrs Thatcher's.

Conservative policy so far has been to allow sterling to find its own level, with little interference from government, and to direct monetary and fiscal policy towards domestic objectives. This is rather a contrast with Labour policy, which attempted to steer a difficult passage between letting sterling rise too high, harming the international competitiveness of British industry, and letting it drop too low, pushing up the inflation rate. Labour anxiety on the inflation front was enhanced by the fear that an extra couple of percentage points on the Retail Price Index could be the last straw for its incomes policy. In consequence, exchange rate movements had important implications for domestic economic management. The Conservatives' *supreme indifference to unemployment* has until recently protected them from worrying unduly about the strength of sterling (any attempt to resist its appreciation would in any case make the task of controlling the money supply significantly harder). But we have reached the stage in the political cycle where the next general election begins to loom on the horizon. The need to present its economic policy as some kind of success (a difficult task!) may force the Government to worry rather more about what the exchange rate is doing. If it falls too much, this will push up the inflation rate, and might ditch any Tory attempt to claim victory on this score; but if it stays too high, unemployment will almost certainly go on rising. There are signs that the recent flurry in the foreign exchange markets has started to focus Conservative minds on this rather awkward dilemma.

THE SNP

The 1979 General Election combined with the apparent apathy to Westminster's rejection of the Assembly Referendum result seemed to mark the bursting of the 70s 'nationalist bubble'. Scotland, however, did not return so neatly to British party politics. The marked swing to Labour represented a decisive rejection of Thatcherism and testified to a continuing and distinctive Scottish politics.

The SNP had built its mass membership on a politics of seemingly unending success. The reversal of 1978/79 was thus traumatic. Not only did the party's membership fall dramatically, but the SNP was also thrown into a long period of bitter in-fighting, which only now seems to be coming to an end. At various times both its left faction — the 79 Group — and neo-fascist Siol nar Gàidheal were threatened with expulsion.

This period was marked, as a gut reaction

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to being out-manoeuvered by Labour over devolution, by a return to a sterile 'independence nothing less' position. The 1980 District Council elections seemed to further reinforce the irrelevance of the SNP and its policies to the mass of the Scottish people. The renewed 'fundamentalist' position — which is not simply that of the Party's rightwing — smacked of a deep cynicism and near contempt for the Scottish people and in particular their labour movement.

Against the 'fundamentalist' and basically petit-bourgeois position (putting 'Scotland first' and rejecting 'British' class politics), there has been a countervailing tendency which recognises that class is the main motor of Scottish politics. The electoral setback of May 1979 resulted in the SNP's left becoming an organised force for the first time with the setting-up of the 79 Group. This faction was formed by several of the SNP's leading personalities of the 70s boom years, who had been temporarily isolated by their commitment to the failed devolution project.

The Group argued that Scottish independence could only be achieved as part of an explicitly socialist programme. The SNP's inability to hold its erstwhile Tory supporters, who had clearly got cold feet at the referendum, together with its inability to shake the allegiance of the working class (the core of the 'yes' vote) to the Labour Party, pointed to the need for the SNP to concentrate its efforts on securing and extending its working class support on the basis of an openly socialist programme. The party, they argued, had to abandon its all things to all people approach since Scotland's politics were clearly class based. The petit-bourgeois 'Scotland first' position had been clearly shown to be misplaced by the ease with which Thatcherism drove the SNP's erstwhile working class supporters back defensively to Labour. The 79 Group has argued that the party has always been left-of-centre in terms of policy but dominated by a right wing leadership; and that it had been the right wing leadership's failure to implement these left policies which had resulted in the reversal in the party's fortunes.

To what extent could the party's policies be deemed left-of-centre? Many of the 79 Group's leaders preferred their policy positions in the past to be called 'radical' rather than 'socialist'. In this they revealed a basically social democratic position — democracy and institutional reform were emphasised rather than the question of ownership. Relations between capital and labour were played down and class confrontation treated as a distortion which could be overcome by 'democratisation', 'decentralisation' and 'workers control'. This position fitted in neatly with the overall strategy of the SNP in the 70s.

The establishment of the 79 Group has however produced a hardening of the left's position. Public ownership now receives prominence and a leading 79 Group member has stated '. . . independence, like every other social advance, can only be won in the class war'. However, their position on many issues is marred by a deep sectarianism towards the broad labour movement; a tendency perhaps reflected by the 79 Group's elitist and cliquish nature within its own party. The Group has only about 300 members and concentrates recruitment amongst leading members of the SNP.

Despite its small size, the 79 Group has built an influence far in excess of its card-carrying membership through an alliance with a loose centrist grouping within the party represented by William Wolfe, the SNP's new president. At the SNP's Aberdeen conference in May, the left achieved major successes on withdrawal from

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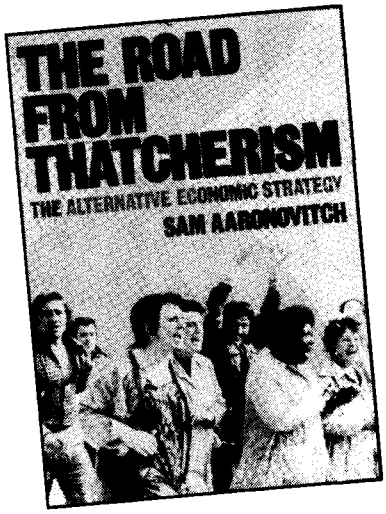

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the EEC and from NATO, but lost on a motion emphasising the role of a greatly extended public sector in Scotland's industrial regeneration. In addition the 79 Group and their centrist allies now have a small majority on the party's executive.

However this shift should not be exaggerated, as leading 79 Group members admit. Within the SNP issues like the EEC and NATO cannot be characterised simply in terms of left and right. The leftward change was exaggerated by sections of the Scottish press largely on the basis of the intervention in support of a left-backed motion on civil disobedience by the charismatic ex-Labour MP and founder of the ill-fated Scottish Labour Party (SLP), Jim Sillars. The SNP remains basically a sort of populist social democratic party. However, at its Aberdeen conference, the organised left have given it a clear left-of-centre image, and pushed it towards a markedly different strategy from that of the 1970s.

The Aberdeen conference was marred by a deep hostility to the Labour Party in Scotland and to the STUC. The party's right wing chairman, Gordon Wilson MP, received thunderous applause when he demagogically attacked Labour's 41 Scottish MPs as 'filletted haddocks', 'gutless, toothless and spineless' in the defence of Scotland's interests. He attacked the STUC's failure to save Linwood, forgetting that the SNP had been unable to make a serious intervention there and had indeed even failed to turn out its membership in large numbers for the February 21 unemployment demonstration in Glasgow. In dismissing Scottish Labour's Assembly proposals out of hand, he ignored

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the fact that these had resulted not from a direct threat from the SNP but largely from trade union pressure, particularly through the STUC, the work of the Scottish Communist Party and a much more principled position amongst many Labour Party people on the issue.

Such sectarianism is perhaps inevitable from a party committed to electoral politics. However, it also represents a genuine reaction against Labour's practice in Scotland and the weakness of its opposition to the Tories. This practice involves a sectarianism which applies not just to parties which threaten its electoral base but also to broader campaigns and alliances. This sectarianism must not be underestimated nor should the problems this creates for left unity and for the national movement.

Nationalism will not go away. The SNP's success is based on the political expression it has been able to give to the Scottish people's legitimate quest for national rights. Although the Labour Party has reaffirmed its commitment to an Assembly (with strong economic powers) it still sees it as a limited and secondary issue. Some of Labour's entrenched Scottish leadership may not wish to land the next Labour government with what some would regard as an embarrassingly strong commitment to an Assembly. This is a dangerous course, for Labour may not be able to contain the desire for self government so easily the second time round.

There is a clear need for the Labour left to integrate home rule with a programme for social and economic advance and harness Scottish national consciousness in a progressive direction to the building of a 'national-democratic' consciousness. This indeed is the approach of the STUC and the Scottish Communist Party. Such a perspective opens up real prospects for left unity and advance and for the isolation of the right wing nationalism of such SNP figures as Gordon Wilson and Douglas Henderson.

There is indeed a considerable reservoir of support for a new home rule project (which falls short of independence) in the SNP, though so far no one has had the courage to articulate it. A more developed labour movement position on the national question could open up the prospect of alliances here. Such an alliance must, however, be based on the principle that the next Scotland Act is drawn up by the Scottish people and their organisations, and not by Westminster civil servants and politicians.

CIVIL SERVICE DISPUTE

The civil servants dispute with its employer, the government, now seems to be entering its final stages. It is particularly significant because it challenges an important aspect of the Tory government's economic policy — the attempt to impose a public sector pay policy through the operation of cash limits.

The 500,000 civil servants are organised into nine civil service trade unions, most of which have only recently affiliated to the TUC.

The absence of a tradition of militancy among the civil service unions has been underscored by a common media projection of civil servants as being closely associated with the bowler-hatted image of the Whitehall mandarin. Nothing could be further from the truth.

The vast majority of civil servants occupy the clerical and middle managerial grades and are drawn from the working class. The incidence of low pay among civil servants is quite staggering. Over two-thirds (366,000) earn less than the average national wage and one-third (150,000) earn less than the official poverty threshold (£75 a week).

One of the obstacles that has prevented the civil service unions from a closer alignment with the labour movement has been the principle of political impartiality whereby civil servants are not allowed to be involved in the politics of the country. In spite of recent moves to erode the principle, the majority of civil servants are still in the 'politically restricted' category. It is interesting to note, therefore, that one effect of the current dispute may well be to draw the civil service unions closer to the labour movement because of the need for TUC support and because of the perceived overtly political nature of the Government's public sector pay policy.

The dispute began formally with the Government's announcement that the 6% cash limit would determine civil service pay in 1981. The usual basis for pay negotiations, the Pay Research Unit (a complex system of comparability), was ignored by the Government and the National Pay Agreement breached. Recourse to arbitration was denied.

Underpinning the dispute, however, is one of the most disastrous records of industrial relations policy pursued by any postwar government. What has particularly angered the union leaders has been the ignoring of all the negotiating and consultative procedures built up over the years, the imposition of policy through 'administrative action', and, what is now becoming apparent, the Government's calculated aim of destroying the trade union movement within the civil service.

The unions responded by uniting under one umbrella organisation, the Council of Civil Service Unions (CCSU), which established forty area organisations throughout the UK to coordinate the pay campaign locally.

The main feature of the campaign so far has been the use of the selective strike strategy combined with the use of one-day strikes, whose purpose has been mainly to display a show of strength and unity and to provide moral support for the selective strikes.

The selective strike strategy is an interesting and rather distinctive development in white collar trade unionism. It has enabled the civil service unions to aim their action specifically at sources of government income: already some £5½ billion, half the entire defence budget for one year, has been withheld from the Treasury. The selective strike also allowed the unions to maintain a pay campaign that largely managed to avoid hitting the public, and, in particular, the old, the sick and the unemployed. And finally it helped to overcome an important feature of many white collar unions, the inability to deliver all-out strike action at the early stage of a dispute.

A major disadvantage of the strategy has been that the length of the dispute has caused significant disaffection with the campaign among union members, manifested especially by the fall-off in the collection of the levy, which is so essential to fund the strategy. More importantly, in spite of its effect on government cash flow, the strategy has so far failed to bring the Government to the negotiating table. And that constitutes the present impasse.

At the time of writing the leadership of the most important and largest unions have recommended all-out strike action as the only viable method of struggle that now remains. The early results of the membership consultations indicate that the membership is not yet willing to back an all-out strategy. The Government will undoubtedly read this as a sign of weakness. Yet the consultative meetings have also shown that the civil servants are clearly unwilling to settle for 7%, the current offer.

The situation therefore remains ambivalent. The selective strategy will probably continue, with various forms of escalation, although a question mark must remain over the ability to levy the membership for funds sufficient to continue the action.

There is no question that the civil servants possess the 'industrial muscle' to win this dispute. The problem is encapsulated by one of Thatcher's 'asides': 'We'll see who is more determined'.

Contributors: **Mike Bleaney**
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Brixton and After

Brenda Kirsch

Community politics in mainland Britain does not usually encompass violence on the streets. Where political violence has occurred — between Left and Right, pickets and police — it has been located at points of political protest (National Front meetings in Red Lion Square, Lewisham, Southall) or industrial protest (Grunwicks, 1972 building workers strike).

For the community to protest in a violent way is extremely unusual. But in just one year there have been two incidents of violent community protest in mainland Britain.[1] In the St Paul's area of Bristol in April 1980 and in Brixton, South London in April 1981, sections of the community attacked police, burned shops and looted. Petrol bombs and looting are in themselves new features in British political life, but the impact of these events lies not just in these new forms of protest. These events are of significance because they focussed on young black Britons living in decaying inner city areas. These multiracial inner cities have been particularly affected by economic and political neglect in the postwar period. That the communities in such areas have taken to the streets in violent protest marks a new stage in the development of reaction to racism and inner city decay as well as to methods of policing.

St Paul's and Brixton

The centres of the revolts in St Paul's and the Railton Road area of Brixton are where police confrontation with the black community is at its sharpest. A constant and massive police presence — with the pretext of combating the drug dealing, illegal drinking and gaming which do occur in these areas — has developed into a pattern of intense harassment of young black people. As a result there is a state of continuous tension between police and the black youth who gather on the streets and in the cafes. Hence the designation of 'front line' for Railton Road in Brixton.

In April 1980 50 police burst into the Black and White Cafe in St Paul's to raid it for illegal drinking and drug possession. In April 1981, at the end of the week-long Operation Swamp, where police activity in Brixton had been at an even higher profile than usual,[2] police in Railton Road took a stabbed black youth into the back of a police van for 'questioning'.

In both incidents black bystanders and residents were outraged at these police actions; outrage which spilled over into attacks on police and property, looting from shops, and in the case of Brixton, the use of petrol bombs (not particularly sophisticated weapons to construct at short notice, despite police claims that these were evidence of a planned attack engineered by outside agitators).

In both cases it was the police and *not* the white population who were a target for attack. In both cases too, damage to property and looting was not completely random, but to some extent selective, aimed at symbols of racism and white power: the shops that don't employ blacks; the pubs that refuse to serve blacks. In both cases too, once the black youth had started the physical fightback against the police, then local white people joined in the attack and the looting.

The significant difference in these two event, however, was the police reaction. At St Paul's, the police withdrew from the area for four hours — a tactic criticised by the law and order lobby, but which in fact enabled a cooling-down period.

Brixton was a very different story. Here the police have been subject to much community scrutiny, but have tended to entrench rather than modify their position as a result. In addition the revolt happened at the end of a week's special exercise, when the police were especially geared up for confrontation. The initial incident happened on a Friday night. On the Saturday, police presence in the area was even greater and a tense atmosphere prevailed throughout the day until a second incident (police arrest of a black man outside a minicab office in the heart of the area) provoked a further 'flashpoint'. Instead of seeking to calm down the atmosphere, police action intensified it. Even more police were sent on to the streets, many with riot shields; the tube station was closed, buses halted and the whole area sealed off, preventing pedestrians and motorists getting into or through the area; the Special Patrol Group raided a local estate and told residents to keep indoors. During this weekend of intense police activity there were also times of apparent breakdown of the internal command structure of the police. Young and inexperienced constables were left to cope with burning riot shields and crowd attack without senior officers present for guidance or discipline. The massive police presence continued for the next few days, with coachloads of police parked in side streets, helicopter and video surveillance, public transport not resumed for 24 hours and (even six weeks later) a permanent police guard on Brixton police station.

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And, two weeks after these events in Brixton, similar clashes between police and black youth took place in North and East London.

BACKGROUND

The black community

Blacks in Britain are no longer 'immigrants'. Young blacks in areas such as St Paul's and Brixton were born here. This fact alone establishes enormous differences between the black population of Britain 20 years ago and the black community today.[3] West Indians were encouraged to migrate to Britain in the 50s for specific economic reasons; to staff the expanding service sector and the new welfare state which a relatively fully employed native workforce could not undertake. And they settled, almost by chance, within certain inner-city areas.

The East Indian community, which came later, and for political as well as economic reasons, is more diverse than that of West Indian origin, although this community too has its children born in Britain. All blacks in Britain have a shared experience of racism, but the recent events have involved those of West Indian origin, and it is this section of the black community under consideration here.

The young black Britons of West Indian origin differ from their parents both in economic role and political consciousness. The combination of economic recession and racism means an effective denial of the economic role 'enjoyed' by their parents in the past. This denial is reinforced by black youth's rejection of the low paid menial jobs accepted by their parents. This rejection is just one aspect of a growing black consciousness; whilst the first wave of West Indian immigrants were optimistic about their future in British society, their British-born children are cynical about theirs.

This growth of black consciousness has also happened in a period during which racism has become legitimated. This process has taken place not just in the enactment of racist laws and the establishment of racist practices both by the repressive and welfare sides of the state. Racism has also been allowed to flourish through the *non*-enactment of tough anti-racist laws (the 1976 Race Relations Act has little effective power) and the feeble position of the Commission for Racial Equality. On an ideological level, racism has been given an intellectual credibility through the work of certain psychologists and educationalists, which has permeated through to attitudes within the schools. Culturally, the mass media still blesses racist humour and black stereotypes. The labour movement too has failed to challenge racism within the working class, or adjusted its structures and practices to allow for the active inclusion of black workers.

All these facts have created an 'institutionalisation' of racism, whereby racist ideas and practices have become embodied in and sanctioned by the state and popular authorities. In addition the black population has been subject to various racist attacks over the years, from Notting Hill onwards.

> The black community's reaction was solid support for the front line youth

The black community's response to this experience has been to develop community-based organisations, such as local youth, educational and church projects. Black community centres have been set up which act as a focus for youth groups, cultural activities and, especially, the Saturday school movement (the black community's attempt to redress the balance of racism within the educational system by teaching its children its own culture in a black atmosphere).

For those used to labour movement organisations, based on national bodies with well-defined structures and elected leaderships, it might appear that the black population lacks any recognisable organisation.[4] Yet these developments at the level of black community politics do represent a movement that is nationwide. National co-ordination does occur from time to time, but not usually on any permanent or long-standing basis (although one exception has been the Organisation of Women of African and Asian Descent, a black women's liberation movement, now in its third year, which significantly involves both Asian and Afro-Caribbean origin women).

The growth of this black political movement has not precluded black people from participating in the traditional structures of the labour movement. Blacks traditionally are Labour voters. Proportionately more black workers than white join trade unions. Black Labour Party members are now beginning to be adopted as candidates for safe seats such as GLC councillor Paul Boetang and Brent councillor Merle Amory. However, in the context of the events at St Paul's and Brixton it is the growing sense of black autonomy, rather than growing black participation in labour movement organisations, which is of significance.

An indication of this new sense of autonomy was seen in black Londoners' reaction to the Deptford fire. Anger about both the 13 deaths and police handling of the case led to the largest ever demonstration by young blacks. The 10,000 who marched the 10 miles from Deptford to Hyde Park, on a Monday, were in effect striking in protest at racial violence. This protest took place six weeks before the Brixton revolt.

Recession and the inner-city

Not only do the communities in St Paul's and Brixton experience racist attack, but they also suffer from the economic and social deprivation of the inner city. St Paul's and Brixton are typical examples of the de-industrialised inner city economies which have grown up as the economy nationally has been declining.[5] Whilst special state assistance has been given to those regions which have lost traditional heavy industry, little attention has been paid to the flight of industry from the apparently prosperous cities, such as London or Bristol.

Until about 20 years ago Brixton, for example, contained a mixture of large factories, small businesses and public services. Practically all large factories have now gone. The telecommunications firm Pye-TMC — part of Dutch Philips — closed as a result of foreign competition. The world famous Tannoy Products, based a few miles away in Streatham, was bought up by an American firm and relocated to a model factory in Scotland, with attractive government incentives. The rubber goods firm Sanitas was closed last year as a result of the parent company's rationalisation programme. The largest private employer in the area is Freeman Mail Order, a distribution centre employing 2,000, mainly part-time women workers.

The many small businesses — engineering, printworks and shops — have also disappeared, a process which started 10-15 years ago, but which has speeded up in the current recession. As a result, Brixton is mainly a 'welfare economy', based on local government, hospitals, schools and social services and a certain amount of other public

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[1] Violent community protest has, of course, dominated Northern Ireland for many years but this violence has occurred within a community divided as well as against the repressive forces of the British state.

[2] 'More than 1,000 people were stopped and questioned and at least 100 arrests were made — double the normal weekly arrest rate.' (*Daily Telegraph* 13.4.81).

[3] Excluding long-established black communities in areas such as Liverpool.

[4] The Asian-origin community does however have a tradition of large scale working class organisations, which has been carried on in the various Asian Workers' Associations.

[5] For a recently published analysis of this process see *Slump City* by Andrew Friend and Andy Metcalf (Pluto Press).

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services, such as transport.

As a result, employment opportunities are scarce and unemployment is at a very high level, 12,158 were registered as unemployed in the borough of Lambeth in March. Employment opportunities for black youth are especially scarce. In April there were only 13 job vacancies registered at the Brixton careers office for 784 jobless 16-19 year olds — more than half of them black. Young blacks are two to three times more likely than young whites to be unemployed (*The Times* 13.4.81).

Urban aid programmes in the 60s and 70s were not concerned with industrial strategy and thus were unable to reverse the degeneration of the inner city economy. However, the Inner City Partnership Programme, set up by the Labour government in 1977, did attempt to include the rebuilding of industry in its assistance to areas such as Brixton. This programme, with its partnership of central and local government *and* the community, also had potential for the involvement of all sections in local planning (albeit small scale and piecemeal).

However, since the election of the Tories in 1979 there has been a reversal in even this modest programme of regeneration. Inner city areas with left Labour administrations (such as Lambeth, the London borough which includes Brixton) have been singled out as special targets for punitive measures. These have included cutbacks to the Partnership Programme, the Local Government Act's attack on council autonomy, central government cuts and pressure to increase the rates. Measures such as these put possible regeneration of areas like Brixton even further into the distance. One notable victim has been the Brixton Leisure Centre. Because of the cuts, its completion is not possible. In an area where recreation facilities hardly exist, this half-built sports centre towers over the streets where the revolt of April 10-12 took place.

Non-community policing

Racism, the growth of black consciousness and the economic degeneration of multiracial inner city areas are key factors underlying the explosions at St Paul's and Brixton. But it needed the additional factor of police harassment to trigger both of these revolts. Constant harassment has come with the depersonalisation of the police in these areas — communities no longer know who their police officers are. The police have become more of an alien force, both in their methods and their lack of identity with the communities they patrol. To impose their authority they thus need to resort to the type of forceful actions which provoked both revolts.

These developments have occurred as part of the process of politicisation of the police since the time Sir Robert Mark was Metropolitan Police Commissioner.[6] The emphasis has shifted from police foot patrols based in specific neighbourhoods to the police station and the panda car. Instead of crime prevention and detection there emerged crime reaction. This 'fire brigade' method concentrates on mass police reactions to public incidents. It is backed up by 'saturation' policing, when large numbers of police, often the entire Special Patrol Group within a region, are drafted into an area. This new style of policing is dependent on high technology to support it, including computers, two way radio, video recorders and helicopter surveillance. It has also emerged as police chiefs have been assuming a more public political role, a trend again dating from the days of Mark. The practice has been adopted not just by authoritarian police chiefs, such as Manchester's James Anderton, but also those with more liberal views such as Devon and Cornwall's John Alderson. Whether authoritarian or liberal, the power of such men is outside the check of police committees. At present, these are the only bodies made up of both police and representatives of local authorities which can consider police matters. They are however bereft of powers to decide on methods of policing, or to call chief constables to account.[7]

> This dilemma has arisen because of the Left's failure to challenge its own racist ideas and practices

All communities have been affected by these developments in policing, but none more so than the multiracial inner cities. The police designate these as 'high crime' areas, and therefore prone to saturation policing. Police stereotyping of black youth as criminals, the use of laws such as Sus and the harassment and criminalisation of sections of the black community have been documented in studies by the Institute of Race Relations *Police against black people* and Lambeth council's inquiry into the police.

The latter was set up as a result of longstanding concern about trends in police-community relations in the Brixton area. Not only has there been the daily harassment of individuals, but the whole community has suffered from large scale and spectacular tours of duty from the Special Patrol Group. There have been eight such exercises since 1975. The most provocative of these, in December 1978, included 1,000 stop-and-searches, 430 arrests and road blocks. A particularly insensitive incident soon after, when police detained black community relations workers, led the Lambeth council to set up its inquiry into police-community relations in the borough. This inquiry published its report[8] just 10 weeks before the revolt. It documented then the degree of harassment of the black community, and the effects of this on homes and families. The extent of the alienation of the police from the community is particularly striking in the widespread use of militaristic metaphors:

> Black people 'have always to be repairing their windows, barricading their doors, they live under a *state of siege*. The whole time' (white woman).
>
> 'The lack of trust is highlighted in young males and adolescents, both black and white. When talking to these young people one gets the impression of *guerilla warfare*' (social workers).
>
> 'The general tide of criticism has inspired a *siege mentality* on the part of the police and its spokesmen' (Labour Party).
>
> 'They don't approach you like they're a peace officer, they're more like *war officers*' (black bus driver).
>
> 'Police raided the youth club about 8pm . . . they burst in like *commandos in Africa*' (youth workers).

The military parallel is also recognised by the police. Former Lambeth police commander Adams explained in a TV interview why he had not informed the then existing police-community liaison committee about a forthcoming SPG exercise thus: 'no good general ever declares his forces in a prelude to any kind of attack'.

The term used in the Lambeth report, 'army of occupation', indicates a widespread reaction in the community. For many the police are an alien force who have no connection or sympathy with the area, who are hostile to and interfere with the daily way of living for that community, and who operate not to protect that community, but to attack its members and its very existence. The situation described in the inquiry report led to an article on the front page of Lambeth council's free newspaper headed, 'Act now to prevent race explosion'. (*Lambeth Local* Feb/March 1981).

THE RESPONSES

The disturbances in St Paul's had the shock of the new; similar disturbances in Brixton however indicated a trend, a development which could be repeated again and elsewhere.

The immediate reaction from the Government was to defend the role of the police and condemn the violence. Thatcher rejected the

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idea that unemployment could be a cause. Many Labour politicians who commented on the events had a different reaction. Local MP John Fraser talked of the 'devastating distrust and discontent' which the events indicated. Lambeth council leader Ted Knight blamed the effects of the Tory government's penalising cuts in causing the revolt. The trade union movement — both the TUC and locally — expressed its concern about the background of unemployment. The Communist Party issued a statement condemning the police presence and the rundown of the inner cities. The black community's reaction was solid support for the front line youth.

Within a few days of the events, the Government announced the setting up of an inquiry under Section 32 of the 1964 Police Act, to be conducted by Lord Scarman. Inquiries are a traditional government reaction to an explosive situation. They operate as 'cooling off' mechanisms, whilst appearing to express genuine government concern to investigate the facts. Both Labour and Tory politicians called for an inquiry into Brixton. Although there was disquiet that the inquiry was to be conducted by one individual and not a panel, the choice of Scarman was at least tactful. His reputation as a more 'liberal' member of the judiciary was borne out in his decision to widen the scope of the inquiry to cover not just the facts of the revolt itself, but also to look at the background to 'the problems of policing in multiracial communities'. Although this extension satisfied the initial criticisms of some Labour politicians, it angered some in the community. The new terms appeared to place the onus on the multiracial community rather than the police. This apprehension about the inquiry was also fed by two additional factors: Scarman's remark in a radio interview that it's only when black and white 'are driven into groups when the herd instinct takes over, that trouble occurs' (*Guardian* 15.5.81); and his refusal to allow certain applicants to be legally represented before him, including the NCCL and the Communist Party. As a result, there has been a semi-boycott of his inquiry with black organisations, the local trades council, the GLC and Communist Party refusing to take part.

Apart from setting up the Scarman inquiry, the Government's other immediate response was to refuse Lambeth council's request for cash aid and greater long term investment. There was however an offer of compensation to those whose property had been damaged, earning the Government some support from local traders and businessmen.

The monetarist 'penalisation' policy was summed up in Thatcher's statement that: 'sometimes too much money does not help to solve problems. It causes more trouble.' (*The Times* 14.4.81).

The police reaction

At Brixton the police were able to test the method of saturation policing to its limits. But a massive police presence in the face of an angry community was unable to control the streets. One immediate police reaction was to demand better equipment and riot training and Home Secretary Whitelaw responded by setting up a review of these matters. Some sections of the police wanted to go further than simply better equipment. Police Federation chairman Jim Jardine said: 'the traditional role of the British policeman can no longer be maintained and a more offensive posture is needed.' Metropolitan Police Commissioner Sir David McNee called for the reintroduction of the 18th century riot act, which would allow mass arrests of any large assembly of people. The Police Federation conference, however, chose not to discuss its attitude towards public order law before Scarman reported.

Scarman's report will herald the next round in the public order debate. The debate concerns not just legislation. There is also the

[6] See *The Political Police in Britain* by Tony Bunyan and *Policing the 80s* by State Research.

[7] See State Research *Bulletin* No 23.

[8] *Final Report of the Working Party into Community/Police Relations in Lambeth*, £4.00 Lambeth Town Hall, Brixton Hill, London SW2.

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controversy (within the state) as to whether Britain should have a paramilitary 'third force', especially trained to deal with civil unrest — along the lines of the CRS in France and the US National Guard. The dominant view so far has been that any special training should be incorporated within the ranks of the existing police force. Whilst this debate has been going on, there has been a significant development of intra-state liaison happening on the ground in the area of civil contingency planning. The Civil Contingencies Unit was set up after the miners' strike in 1973 to co-ordinate police, armed forces and security services response to civil emergencies. A military liaison duty officer (a naval captain) was in fact posted in Brixton police station over the weekend of the revolt.

> the Brixton events have not necessarily driven the white community into a racist reaction.

The Left's reaction

For the Left in Lambeth, the Brixton revolt came as no great surprise. The Labour Party, trade union movement, Communist Party and the many other groups on the Left have long been aware of the police treatment of the black community in an area beset with inner city decline. For this reason, the last three SPG exercises in the area have been met with concerted opposition, which includes the Labour council leadership, the trades council and the Left parties. But alongside this protest at police activity, there have also been more positive attempts to rebuild the area, through participation in the inner city partnership programme, the umbrella group of voluntary organisations, the neighbourhood councils, a Lambeth Co-operative Development Agency as well as within the trades council and tenants' bodies. All of these activities have been severely curtailed by central government cuts; the need to fight back against the cuts, whilst maintaining a Labour council committed to serving the needs of a multiracial inner city, has been a dominant feature in local politics. The immediate reaction to the Brixton revolt was thus to place it in this context.

But this process of making the connections between Tory cuts and the anger of black youth does have limitations. Although cuts have not helped to regenerate Brixton and alleviate the problems which spark off discontent, to reduce the black reaction to the question of fighting the cuts does not help forge alliances with the black community. The translation of the black experience into what sections of the Left tend to identify as 'real' politics is to do a disservice to the black community and its specific oppression. This lack of sensitivity to the black community's experiences was especially marked at a defence meeting held after the weekend. Instead of listening to the experiences of the black youth involved, certain groups attempted to lecture the black community on what it should be doing eg, building community councils (Workers Revolutionary Party), smashing the Tory state (Revolutionary Communist Tendency) and other such all-purpose litanies. Because of this mechanistic response, other sections of the Left, perhaps fearing accusations of racism, were able to do little more than respond to the immediate demands of the black community, such as raising funds. The Left response thus fell into a dilemma between the all-purpose every-issue-leads-to-revolution approach and the let's-wait-and-see-what-the-black-community-wants-us-to-do approach. This dilemma has arisen because of the Left's failure to recognise the autonomous black movement and to build alliances with it as well as failing adequately to challenge its own racist ideas and practices. As a result the Left has been unable to associate these new developments with its traditional strengths in a way which can advance the concerns of both blacks and whites in the inner cities.

The black community's reaction

For the black community probably the most striking reaction to the Brixton revolt was the solidarity it created. Solidarity in Brixton between parents and children, and solidarity of *all* the black communities in Britain with the people of Brixton; the youngsters on the Brixton front line were fighting back on behalf of the community as a whole.

However, for ultra left sections of the black community, such as that associated with the *Race Today* collective, the front line youth were identified as revolutionaries, heralding an uprising of spontaneous and violent revolts by black youth throughout the inner cities. This familiar position of spontaneous revolution is also combined with a black separatism which is opposed to alliances with other oppressed sections.

Broader sections of the black community — educational, youth and church organisations and those working in the labour movement — have a more positive response of wanting to move towards greater organisation of black people. Experiences from the Asian sections of the black community have shown that this is possible, with the formation of Bengali and Southall youth movements, and the massive anti-racist protests held in Coventry in May. These sections of the black community are developing an autonomous movement which the Left must listen to and make alliances with.

The white community and law and order

For many whites in the inner cities, the reaction to the Brixton events was to demand more law and order. These demands have been seriously neglected by the Left, who associate them almost exclusively with authoritarian Tory ideology. Yet crime is a common feature of inner city life, including burglary, bag snatching, sexual assault and racist attack. Although the Left has taken up the issue of police harassment of the black community, it has failed to deal with other wide concerns. In this vacuum, those elements of Tory ideology which call for tough action for muggers and vandals do have some impact on the white community — even though the Tories neglect to comment on the police's inability or unwillingness to detect and clear up crimes or recover property.

Failure to develop policies on crime and the police has led to a gap in the Left's credibility within sections of the white working class. This was shown in the elections in Lambeth just a month after the events in Brixton. The Tories ran their campaign on the twin issues of too much rates and too little law and order. The result was a greater swing to the Tories than recorded elsewhere in London, where trends were generally in the other direction. The Tories concentrated particularly hard on maintaining their Norwood seat, which includes parts of Brixton, against the opposition of Ted Knight. This they succeeded in doing with the biggest swing in London.

Although the Tories gained votes in the elections, the National Front performed dismally. This suggests that the Brixton events have not necessarily driven the white community into a racist reaction. Rather, sections of it are seeking a solution which the Left is failing to provide.

LONGER TERM IMPLICATIONS

The events at Brixton have far-reaching implications for developments within policing, the inner cities, the black community and the Left.

Unless there are changes both in the methods which police use in multiracial communities and their degree of public accountability then such confrontations will recur, in Brixton and elsewhere.

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Scarman's report might very well lead to changes in police methods, for example by placing more emphasis on beat policing (ie, police allocated to specific streets for regular foot patrols). Although a more positive method than large scale and 'anonymous' saturation policing, an increase of beat police does contain some dangers. In particular, there is the danger of greater surveillance of the community and the feeding of information (about lifestyles and politics as well as 'criminal' matters) onto police computers. In the absence of effective police accountability (and although less overtly repressive than the possible introduction of a paramilitary force or a McNee-style Riot Act) such trends towards still more state 'intelligence' on the community contribute towards the growth of authoritarianism.

Government support to the decaying inner cities is likely to be less forthcoming than their support of the police. Yet it is the fact that multiracial inner cities have been subject to neglect on all sides that laid the basis for the Brixton and Bristol events. For the Tories to perpetuate that neglect — in terms of the combined deprivation of industry, employment, housing, social and leisure services which is unique to these areas — would be to encourage more Brixtons; Thatcher's statement that more money does not solve problems indicates, however, that the neglect will continue.

In the short term there might be encouragement to 'redevelop' areas such as Railton Road, but this would be to clear away the problem by dispersing the community. Tory inner city policy is to rundown the partnership scheme and encourage free enterprise zones in certain selected areas. Yet this 'policy' will actually speed up the degeneration of such areas, which only greater cash resources would prevent.

Black community

For the black community, the events at Brixton have led to greater cohesion in the face of police harassment and decay of their neighbourhoods. Even if a national black organisation is not formed as a result, the existence of a black autonomous movement based in the Brixton community needs to be recognised by the Government and the Left. This movement will be especially on its guard against any moves towards repatriation (as raised by the Monday Club), the disbandment of the Commission for Racial Equality (which despite its weaknesses at least indicates government commitment to a multiracial society), and increased National Front activity (which will breed in inner city areas left to decay).

The Left and labour movement will need to consider the implications of an autonomous black movement, such as the basis on which alliances are made (a unity of different interests) and possible demands from its own black members to set up caucuses to further the specific demands of the black movement.

Tory inner city policy is to run down the partnership scheme and encourage free enterprise zones

Arising from Brixton too, the Left needs to consider whether it has developed adequate policies on policing and a strategy on law and order which challenges Tory repressive ideology with an approach which puts protection of the whole community within a framework of genuine democratic accountability.[9] The scope of the alternative economic and political strategy also needs to be widened to include the regeneration of multiracial inner city areas,[10] which is currently absent.

The events at Brixton and Bristol occurred *not* because these are multiracial communities, but because police action sparked off a population already aggrieved through lack of jobs, poor housing and the general pressures of life in a decaying inner city. A radical change in present policing plus resources and longer term planning for such areas would not only prevent community violence, but would generate attractive and thriving multiracial centres of work, residence and leisure. □

[9] The Communist Party's Charter of Demands on Racism and the Police (see *Comment* 21.2.81) is a move in this direction.

[10] For one such attempt see 'Labour Councils begin to regenerate the Cities' by Richard Minns in *Labour Research* July 1981.

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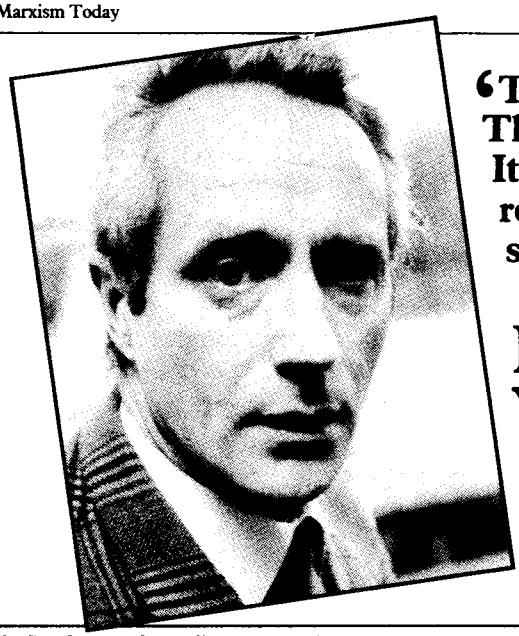

'The prospects are absolutely terrible . . . The depressive forces will get even worse . . . It is a prospect so dreadful that I can't really believe that there won't at some stage be a sort of political revolution'

Interview with Wynne Godley

Interview conducted by Rob Rowthorn and Dave Currie

Wynne Godley is Professor of Applied Economics and Director of the Department of Applied Economics at the University of Cambridge. He founded the Cambridge Economic Policy Group (CEPG) in 1971 after working for some time in the Treasury engaged in macro economic forecasting. The CEPG is the main group concerned with medium term forecasting in the UK. It has consistently pointed to the danger that growing import penetration and loss of world markets will lead to increasing stagnation and rising unemployment in the UK. The CEPG has therefore advocated a strategy of economic expansion based on a combination of fiscal policy and import controls to overcome these problems. Despite being dubbed as 'alarmist' by the press, and being dismissed by many academic economists, the Group's record in forecasting medium term trends has been remarkably accurate. In particular, they foresaw much earlier than other groups the stagnation in output from the mid-seventies and the devastating consequences of the policies of Thatcher's government.

Perhaps we could start by talking about your views on the prospects for the UK through the 1980s.

My view is that the prospects are absolutely terrible within the framework of existing policies or anything like them. We already have the worst slump since the 30s, and our depression is very much more severe than other countries' depression, notwithstanding that we are the only industrialised country which is self-sufficient in oil. And all the factors which have been making for depression are going to continue, so as soon as oil stops contributing in a positive way, the depressive forces will get even worse, and we shall see something I can only describe in apocalyptic terms. It is a prospect so dreadful that I can't really believe that there won't at some stage be a sort of political revolution, which will demand, effectively call for, a basic change of policy.

Would you say that in some respects the present depression is worse than that of the 1930s? The figures you are now projecting for unemployment are at least as high as in the 30s and the economy is less resilient than it was in those days.

I think in one sense it isn't as bad as the 30s in that the national income hasn't fallen so much yet, largely because of the North Sea Oil, so it has been possible to maintain a high level of unemployment benefit, and the amount of suffering so far is not so great. But at the same time the prospects within the framework of existing policies must be worse, we're in a more advanced state of industrial senility. We have no Empire, we've lost our markets, we've lost such an enormous proportion of world trade compared with the 30s when we were still a very predominant manufacturing nation in world terms. But we aren't anymore.

And in the 1930s there were expanding industries in the south-east but there are no equivalent expanding sectors today.

I don't think there are any equivalent industrial sectors at all.

If you see Thatcher's policies as doomed to failure, what alternative policies would you see replacing them?

Well, I think the alternative policies to replace them are very much more difficult to implement than most people who oppose current policies suppose. It is more than just reversing Mrs Thatcher's policies because the previous Labour government had already initiated a quasi-monetarist policy which had started a slump. It was then very severely aggravated by the Conservative government. But if one was simply to reverse what this government has done one would still be left in a very bad position. But of course, into the bargain, it can't be simply reversed because a lot of destruction has already taken place. Anyone who thinks that there is a simple option of reflation is completely wrong.

Does this mean that you think there is not a great deal of excess capacity in the economy at the moment?

Well, there have been some industries which have just closed down — motor cycles obviously, and others such as textiles, pottery and steel have diminished in size. Moreover a lot of firms in most industries have closed down so that capacity has been reduced throughout the economy.

But having said this I'm inclined to think that there would be enough capacity one way or another to employ everyone — if only we could make sure that the additional earnings created in the process of expansion were spent on British goods and not on imports. To some people I know this sounds like sacrificing the consumer to the producer. But they are completely wrong because they are forgetting that consumers are also producers, and that British consumption in total cannot be greater than British production. It's largely because we

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spend such a high proportion of our income on imports that we can't make anything like full use of the productive capacity that exists and there is so much unemployment.

This brings us to the question of import controls. What do you think is the benefit of such controls?

The benefit of import controls, subject to various conditions, is first of all that it is now probably the only way of being able to regain full employment.

In theory you could do the same thing, that is to say you could expand, with devaluation but it would take a long time; one of the few things we know is that the responses to price changes work very slowly. So devaluation could at best produce an expansion of output, slowly, over two, three, or five years and it would also be inflationary. I think that the major advantage of import controls is that they could produce an expansion of output quickly and would not be inflationary, contrary to what most people say.

You think that prices would not rise significantly if there were import controls?

I don't think so myself. I think very likely it's the other way round and inflation would be reduced rather than aggravated.

Do you think that with an expansion of demand uneconomic capacity would be brought into use and that protection would encourage industrial conservatism?

That just depends what is being compared with what. If our national product is very much larger, we can have more goods and services, more employment and higher public expenditure; that for me is a good definition of a relatively efficient economy. I mean to say efficient compared with a world in which we have falling output and falling government expenditure and high and rising unemployment.

What would you say to the right wing argument that the present depression is needed to drive inefficient firms out of business and get rid of out-of-date equipment?

I think that there are two very clear answers to that. One is that I would rather live in a world which is producing and employing inefficiently, than one which is not producing at all and not employing at all. That is a sufficient answer to the question. But the other one is that I don't believe that depression is the right atmosphere for any creative kind of change to take place anyway. With a policy of protection and expansion creative change can occur, particularly if import controls are not selective and don't just prop up one relatively inefficient firm after another under conditions of stagnation. They should be used as a macroeconomic instrument, as a device whereby generalised expansion can take place.

What you are saying is that import controls have to be used in such a way as to facilitate modernisation rather than obstruct it, and to protect certain areas against the effect of overly rapid change?

This is extremely important because I think that most of the opposition to import controls is based on a total misunderstanding of their potential role in macroeconomic policies. People see import controls as being predominantly or entirely a device for propping up this or that inefficient firm, which somehow ought to go bust anyway. I don't see it like that at all. I see it as a very general macroeconomic instrument to enable a very general expansion to take place. If import controls are not selective at all, then of course it doesn't even stop the relatively inefficient firms, or even whole industries, still going bust. People who want the very inefficient to go bust will still have their joy.

There is quite a difference between the position of your group on import controls and that of the TUC. The TUC still resists the call for general import controls and calls for selective controls. Would you think that in the TUC position there is more danger of conservatism than in a call for general controls?

I'm putting forward what I think to be the ideal policy which is that controls should be as little selective as possible.

Your argument seems to be as follows. If we are going to have economic expansion at home we can't afford to pay for a vast quantity of extra *imported manufactured goods. The purpose of import controls is to stem this potential flow and as far as possible, to do this in a non-discriminatory way so that protection is not used as an excuse for propping up declining industries and propping up the inefficient producer.*

Sounds obvious, doesn't it? We've got to keep imports to the level that can be paid for by exports by one means or another. We have to keep imports to the level that can be paid for by exports *anyway*, that is a given. I want to do that at the highest possible level of domestic output, and if that requires protection then so be it. I vastly prefer protection to depression as a means of balancing the books.

I would like to say something about the TUC position on selective control. I'm not going to quarrel too fiercely with this position because a sufficient condition for obtaining my support is that it has the desired macroeconomic properties.

That is, so long as we keep imports in total down to the level that can be paid for with exports and have full employment in the economy as a whole that's good enough for me. And if you can devise a selective scheme which has that property then I would support it. Because that is the touchstone. What I however would positively object to is a scheme of protection which is not conceived of as a component of an all-round macroeconomic policy, but props up or picks up or saves some otherwise uncompetitive industry still in a general context of depression and stagnation.

> as soon as oil stops contributing in a positive way, the depressive forces will get even worse, and we shall see something I can only describe in apocalyptic terms.

So you really see import controls as part of a strategy for general expansion?

Essentially, as that, yes.

Do you think the expansion of demand, which would accompany import controls, would in itself generate long term economic growth? Or do you believe some kind of active industrial policy would also be needed to ensure the necessary investment and modernisation of industry?

My judgement is that we would have a reasonable chance of setting in train a dynamic process of growth and modernisation if we could have a consistent period of expanded demand for manufactured products which we have never had in the postwar period, not once, never longer than two years. There used to be a thing, as everyone knows, called

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'stop-go' or 'go-stop' which meant that domestic demand was expanded for two years at a time and the economy went galloping down a cul-de-sac. All the wrong signals were given, producing expansion of services, and expansion of imports so the policy always had to be reversed. Now what we have *never* had is a period of sustained expansion of demand with consistently directed signals towards industry. I think it is possible that if we could have sustained growth of demand, just within the limits of our capacity to produce, that might conceivably be a sufficient policy. But it might not. But there is one compartment of industrial policy which I see quite clearly and that comes under the heading of regional policy, which I support completely, unequivocally. That's to say, we know that there are certain regions of the country that are chronically depressed and where emigration has been taking place consistently and where unemployment remains consistently high, and I strongly support measures to increase relative growth rates in depressed areas. Whether one can do better and in some sense 'back winners' by aiding specific firms or industries, I am not sure.

You seem to be arguing that a sustained expansion of demand is in itself sufficient to produce long term growth in the economy and a high level of investment. Do you think that firms will automatically *invest on a large enough scale to modernise the economy provided there is enough demand? Do you think this is likely or will some special measures be needed to encourage investment?*

My real opinion is that expanded demand is sufficient. There's a long tradition of giving incentives and tax allowances to firms and I'm quite happy to make investment in effect free. But just as the advantages given to fixed investment have been so unsuccessful under conditions of chronic stagnation and cumulative failure, I rather doubt if they are crucially important in a world of sustained expansion of demand. But I'd be open to suggestion.

Do you think that planning agreements, as suggested by Tony Benn and within your own group Francis Cripps, could be useful as a way of encouraging and directing private investment?

I think they could be, yes, but it's very difficult to say general things, about how and when they should be used. They may be necessary or they may not. I'm not clear about that.

Quite a lot of people in the labour movement say that what we need is a stronger state sector. More publicly-owned companies, together with planning agreements, to produce some kind of coherent industrialisation such as the French had in the 1950s or the Japanese have had for the last 70 or 80 years. However, you seem to lean more to the market oriented approach and believe that, provided demand conditions are satisfactory, the private sector can look after itself.

Yes, that's broadly what I think.

But that's not true of everyone in your group.

No, it's not true of everyone in my group, and I'm very open to suggestion. I'm so unclear as to how you set up criteria for state intervention.

Do you mean that the state doesn't actually have the information needed for effective intervention?

No, I don't think it does. Certainly it has made the most dreadful mistakes is in the past in the field of public investment.

Some people say that the British National Oil Corporation is an exception to this. That BNOC has given the government much better knowledge of oil production and the oil industry, so it can negotiate seriously with the private firms operating in the North Sea, in a way it could never have done otherwise.

I wonder what that's really amounted to though. I mean negotiating with them to do what?

The government knows more of what the true conditions of production are.

Which is very useful for taxing them, and presumably for knowing how to determine prices. But I wouldn't have thought it would have made very much difference to investment — that's the crucial point.

To sum up. Your group as a whole are all agreed on the positive virtues of expanding demand, for which they believe protection and import controls are necessary. But there are quite a lot of disagreements over what else has to accompany such a policy.

Yes, there are differences of emphasis. I must of course make it absolutely clear I'm not an expansionist of the conventional kind, of the 'go' kind.

You mean that unless something is done about the balance of payments, expansion of demand is just a waste of time?

That's it, it's just a waste of time or worse.

It goes back to George Brown's national plan, doesn't it, which came a cropper after a few months because nothing was done about the balance of payments?

Well, it goes back before that. It really goes back to Heathcote Amory, it goes back to 1959. And then Maudling.

Let's turn to some international questions. How do the problems of the UK economy — and your solutions to them — tie in with problems in the world economy?

Well, the general answer is that I don't think that free trade is the best way of organising international trade. The classical theory of international trade, which appears in text books and which is extremely influential in peoples' minds, is based on a *postulate* of full employment. If you assume full employment you can easily prove that free trade is mutually advantageous. But if you think, as I do, that full employment cannot be assumed, then it's easy to make out a realistic case that free trade is extremely destructive to economies that are relatively unsuccessful. Instead of making them more prosperous and better-off, it destroys them. I think this is a general proposition; it applies to the United Kingdom at the moment because it's a relatively unsuccessful country, and I think it is beginning to apply to the United States, which is also becoming a relatively unsuccessful country.

When you say that you think that the free trade system is a bad system, how do you think it should be changed? It's easy enough to say Britain should have import controls, but how do you see this in international terms?

Well, the logical answer to the question which, as an academic, is what I am primarily called on to give, is quite clear to me. If all relatively unsuccessful countries protect in the way we suggest — using import controls to raise domestic output and *not* to strengthen their balance of

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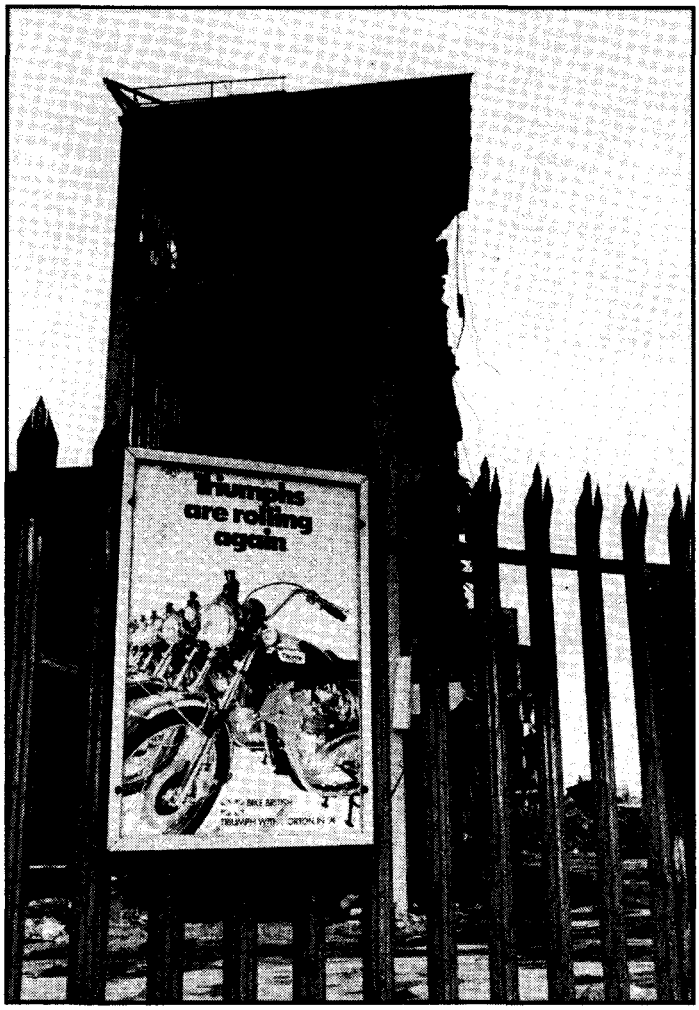

Anyone who thinks that there is a simple option of reflation is completely wrong

payments — the system of protection can be generalised advantageously. But that assumes a high degree of international co-operation, and international co-operation of a new kind.

That's quite important to say. It contradicts the widespread view that you and your group are very inward-looking and are not concerned with the international consequences of your proposals.

Yes, that is because a certain amount of smearing takes place. We're type cast and people very often don't read what we say, but only what other people report us, often inaccurately, as saying. That is very strictly *on* the record. But Francis Cripps and I have written, as you know, a piece specifically on this question, pointing out that there will probably be a net advantage to the Third World as a whole from protection of the kind we propose. Our aim is *not* to reduce *total* imports, but rather to spend more of our foreign exchange earnings on the imported raw materials which are needed for economic expansion. This would aid the less developed countries without harming the advanced countries.

Britain would initially spend less on imported manufactures from other advanced countries. On the other hand we should spend more on raw materials imported from less developed countries who would therefore be able to increase *their* imports of manufactures. So although Europe, Japan and other advanced countries would export less to Britain they would be compensated by more exports to the Third World. Contrary to what our critics always claim, our policy of protection would actually increase world trade and production *particularly* in the Third World.

What about the objection that in practice import controls might well work against the Third World, simply because political considerations would make it very difficult to use controls against countries like, say, Germany.

Well, I would prefer protection to be completely non-selective with regard to country of origin, which is, of course, fully in accordance with GATT. Contrary to what most people seem to suppose, whatever custom and practice may be, the treaty we signed, or the agreement we reached, was about the circumstances under which we could protect; it did not forbid protection as such. The sin against the Holy Ghost in GATT is to protect in a discriminatory way. So, the present movement is for the developed countries, notwithstanding all their emotional desire for free trade, their lip service to free trade, to move very strongly in the direction of discriminating against the less developed countries. I would make controls completely non-discriminatory, there would be some protection of a non-discriminatory kind against *all* exporters of *manufactured* goods. But I think that, under the policy that I propose, the prospects for less developed countries would be better than they look at the moment, with a drift towards protectionism of a selfish and discriminatory kind.

So what you're saying is that by having a generalised strategy for import controls we can stop the present drift towards discriminatory measures against the Third World?

Absolutely.

Many people say import controls would simply export unemployment. What is your answer to that?

I've already answered that, in that I've sketched a model under which, so long as you keep the total level of imports as high as it otherwise would have been, the level of employment in the rest of the world is at *least* maintained, and maybe increased, in so far as the production in the Third World is higher.

So some lose but others gain?

There should be a *net* benefit, and certainly not a net loss, so I entirely reject the idea that it's an internationally anti-social policy, providing always my conditions are met.

What would you say about the question of retaliation, especially from the Western world?

On the general question of retaliation, it has to be immediately conceded that if all countries retaliated they would win and we would lose. In other words, a policy of protection can be completely nullified by concerted retaliation by other countries. However, there are a lot of observations one could make about that. Firstly, other countries protect successfully, such as Japan, and in the past Germany. Secondly, since under our programme other countries would gain rather than lose, this is depriving them of a valid rationale for retaliation. Thirdly, if we protect in a non-discriminatory way and others retaliate in a discriminatory way against us, they are in contravention of GATT, not us, so it is they who would be breaking international law.

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This brings us to the Common Market. Although non-discriminatory protection may be consistent with GATT, it clearly is not consistent with the Treaty of Rome.

Yes, it is a big subject this, I'm sorry I'll see if I can condense. First of all recall that it was always obvious, it was part of the prospectus of going into the Common Market, that we would pay much more for food and make a large contribution to the budget, and in return we would get dynamic benefits from having a 'home market' of 250 million people.

Well, we paid the costs all right, but as Nicky Kaldor forewarned, we got none of the promised benefits. So I regard the consequences of joining the Common Market up to now as absolutely dreadful, because we've paid the costs without receiving the benefits. Now I do think we have made a very serious mistake, a very serious error of tactics as a country, in how we've handled the problem. British governments, as soon as they realised that they were making these contributions to the budget, and the country was paying more for food, behaved like childen and said 'give us our money back', although it was all part of the understanding right from the beginning. So I think that that queered the pitch for negotiating over the really important things. They should have continued to pay these costs, which they always knew they were going to have to pay, and negotiated to get a better deal for industrial products and ensure that Britain received some of the dynamic benefits we had been promised. And that could perfectly well have meant protection, or its logical equivalent, which would be subsidies of some kind, or planning agreements of some kind.

I feel quite optimistic that agreement could have been reached along those lines with the precedent that free trade in agricultural products was so readily abandoned by the Common Market. Originally free trade in food was one of the cornerstones of the Common Market, but when exchange rates started fluctuating free trade was found to be extremely disadvantageous to the German farmers and excessively advantageous to the French farmers. Free trade in agricultural products was therefore abandoned and the present very complicated Green Currency system was introduced. This is nothing other than disguised protection; it is logically equivalent to protection for agricultural products. It would have been easily within the scope of the ingenuity of the civil servants of Brussels to cook up a similar scheme for industrial products — a 'black pound' if you like — which would have protected British manufacturing industry.

In your view, then, the conflict over the common agricultural policy and budgetary policy is really rather a diversion from the central issues of industrial policy and trade.

The importance of these costs was *very* greatly exaggerated; and by taking the stance we have our most important bargaining counter has been thrown away. We should willingly pay off the French farmers and get the French to help us negotiate the equivalent protection for our industry. Particularly vis-a-vis the Germans.

Do you think that it is politically feasible to extend protection to Britain's industrial products whilst remaining within the EEC?

I'm not really in a position to judge that. I don't know what the answer is. I can really only get up to the point where I can see what is advantageous to us, what is advantageous to other countries, and if something is very advantageous to us and not disadvantageous to other countries, then I feel that there must be a political solution. If I am being unrealistic then, in the last resort, I'll have to say 'we've got to emigrate and go to Australia, if they'll have us'!

> free trade is extremely destructive to economies that are relatively unsuccessful. Instead of making them more prosperous and better-off, it destroys them

Or if reform of the EEC is out of the question should Britain withdraw?

To leave it. Absolutely.

What about the possibility of planning agreements on an international level? Do you mean that the investment decisions of big companies should be somehow co-ordinated on a European level?

Yes. That I see because I can imagine that as an aspect of regional policy. That to me is very like, it is really exactly the same, as a regional policy within *one* country.

You mean that, because big companies are now multinational, and operating all over Europe, we need a European regional policy. Each country to be seen as a region, just as 25 years ago we needed a national regional policy.

And just as we still need a national regional policy. Precisely, that's exactly the right analogy.

But what kind of institutional form would that take? When one talks about regional policy within Britain, one can say it's up to the government in London to control the investment of firms and direct them to certain areas of the country, such as Scotland or Wales. But what would be the institutional form for a regional policy covering Western Europe as a whole? If Britain pulls out of the Common Market, the prospects for international control of investment and for a European regional policy seem remote.

That's absolutely true. This is the maddening thing. The Common Market does, potentially, if not actually, have the institutions to conduct an effective, quasi-regional policy between the countries. And the proportion of the EEC budget which goes on regional development should be very greatly expanded.

So you are saying the Common Market could offer us certain benefits, in principle, provided it was a very different kind of Common Market. So in fact you have a potentially positive attitude towards the Common Market?

Very much so, yes.

But you may be reluctantly negative?

Absolutely. Because what I'm proposing is extremely different from anything that has happened so far or is now in prospect.

To return to some of the questions we discussed earlier. Do you really think that one million unemployed by 1990 is achievable by your strategy of import controls and reflation of the economy?

I think it is possible. So far as I can see the rise in unemployment from under 1½% in the 1950s to its present appalling level is simply, well almost entirely, the result of insufficient demand, and could, not

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immediately, but over say a period of five years sustained expansion, simply be reversed. I do think that.

But it would require quite a big investment programme wouldn't it?

Very big.

It's not just a matter of putting people back to work in existing factories and existing plants.

No, because full employment requires an addition to total output of 25% or so. It's an enormous difference.

What you're saying, in other words, is that it is possible to have a big expansion in the British economy to provide a lot more jobs, but that this would require a really big expansion and not just a marginal improvement in the present situation.

Absolutely enormous. And even with no change in underlying productivity trends, I would reckon the increase in output could be 25%, a huge, huge change.

What about the claim that any big expansion in the British economy would be highly inflationary?

I think they're simply wrong about it. Nobody understands inflation. People have very strong views about it but they have no right to them. The historical evidence is against the idea that full employment means inflation. When we had absolutely full employment in the 1950s, with unemployment around 300,000 on average, under half a million on

we paid the cost of the Common Market but we got none of the promised benefits

average, price inflation fell from 12% at the end of the Korean War to zero, precisely zero, in the year 1959. And since then it's been in a period of very high unemployment that inflation has accelerated. So those people who assume that an expansionary policy is bad for inflation, makes inflation worse, have got a hell of a lot of explaining to do. Indeed, history gives me considerable grounds for hope that if you have an expansionary policy you would at least have as good a chance as any other policy of getting inflation down. I think that the political conditions under which you could get an effective incomes policy are very much more likely to be fulfilled if there is expansion and falling unemployment than recession and rising unemployment.

You mention the question of incomes policy. By implication you're saying that in an expanding economy the unions would be more willing to accept an incomes policy because it would be accompanied by rising living standards, whereas in the past it has been accompanied by a reduction in living standards.

Absolutely.

But do you believe an incomes policy is necessary?

Like industrial policies, all governments in the end have to have incomes policies. Every government, before they came in, said they were not going to have one, but in the end they did. I learnt my lesson

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in the Treasury in 1975. I had firmly believed that effective incomes policies were impossible to implement because they always distorted differentials arbitrarily. But when the year 1975 came and there was a great burst of inflation, and the public was somehow expecting, requiring an incomes policy, public opinion was ready for it, when I found myself opposing it for too long in internal discussions, I suddenly found myself to be, as they say, a silly person. I was saying something which was silly. The government has to have an incomes policy towards its own employees, which are very numerous, and it also has to take a stand, one way or another. It has to say, even if it just announces like Selwyn Lloyd did, a pay pause, an appeal for voluntary restraint, which is the weakest form of incomes policy, it always has to do something. And it always in practice matters that it does so.

The precise form it will take is a matter of very skilful political judgement which must be adapted to the circumstances of the time. The clearest things that one can say about incomes policies are negative things. You must not intervene in a grossly arbitrary way with differentials. For instance, flat rate increases should be eschewed because there is always a boomerang later on. But there has to be one, I'm quite clear.

In practice your view of incomes policies seems to be rather a weak one.

Yes it is.

A call for moderation in return for real benefits.

Yes.

And presumably the real benefits you envisage are not just things like higher wages as a result of growth, but also things like better social services?

Yes. As I said just now people are more likely to accept an incomes policy under conditions of growth. With rising real wages the pressure for higher money wages will be less.

Your vision is of a new sort of social contract under which this time the government really does deliver its side of the bargain?

Yes, I'm quite optimistic about what could be achieved. The 1950s, when unemployment and inflation were both low, made such a strong impression on me that I would still be optimistic that, if the government had a very strong policy for growth combined with a rather weak policy on incomes, the consequence would be to reduce inflation rather than increase it.

Do you see the need for controls on prices? Protection would increase the price of imports, and British manufacturers might exploit the situation to increase their own prices.

There is a huge accumulation of evidence now, that domestic manufacturers do not alter their prices because of changes in import prices.

But, if there were signs that firms were taking advantage of import controls to raise their prices, do you think it would be feasible to have some form of price control?

We did have the Prices Commission under the last government and it was, I think, well enough equipped to spot and check exploitation of such a situation. I don't think the Prices Commission made an enormous difference to inflation. But I think that the reason for that

Nobody understands inflation. People have very strong views about it but they have no right to them

was that there wasn't any sneaky raising of profit margins. They didn't really have a job to do. Prices simply were following costs.

Even so, your analysis suggests that economic expansion would lead to a substantial rise in profit margins.

Ah, but that happens because of a cyclical rise in productivity, when overheads including the cost of overhead labour get spread over a greater volume of output. There would indeed be a huge rise in profit margins without any increase in prices.

And, in fact, this is the way in which additional investment would be financed in your analysis?

Yes, there wouldn't be any need to raise prices. It's a very important point.

So, to the extent that you are thinking in terms of an incomes policy, a requirement might be that firms are expected to re-invest their profits rather than hand them all out as higher dividends?

Yes, you could have dividend control, and you could have price control, at least on a temporary basis.

There is a problem with your position, isn't there? If you want moderation on the wages front, you have to ensure as a counterpart that firms which make substantial profits use them productively?

I think that would be a matter of rather fine political judgement at the time. I don't think it would be terribly important quantitatively, but if it was perceived to be important something along those lines might have to be done.

So there would be a substantial rise in profits as a result of the expansionary policies you propose.

Certainly, no question of it. And there would be a big increase in the share of profits. There's no doubt about that and that might be damaging for incomes policy, indeed it might, yes.

One final question, to sum up. Would it be true to say that the strategy you envisage — expansion via import controls without very much state intervention in the economy — is really aimed at stabilising the present economic system, and that you do not envisage any radical change? It's therefore rather different from the position of those on the Left who put forward a package which involves substantially similar elements, but are really thinking in terms of a transition to something more radical, of moving towards a new kind of society?

Yes, I would accept that. I'm first and foremost concerned with setting the macroeconomic conditions for expansion; I'm sure they're necessary, and I think it is possible that they will be sufficient. But if they're not sufficient, then I'm quite open-minded about changing my opinion and having, what you might call, a more interventionist, I didn't like just to say a more left wing position, yes, a more interventionist position, both on incomes and on investment and even on nationalisation, if necessary.

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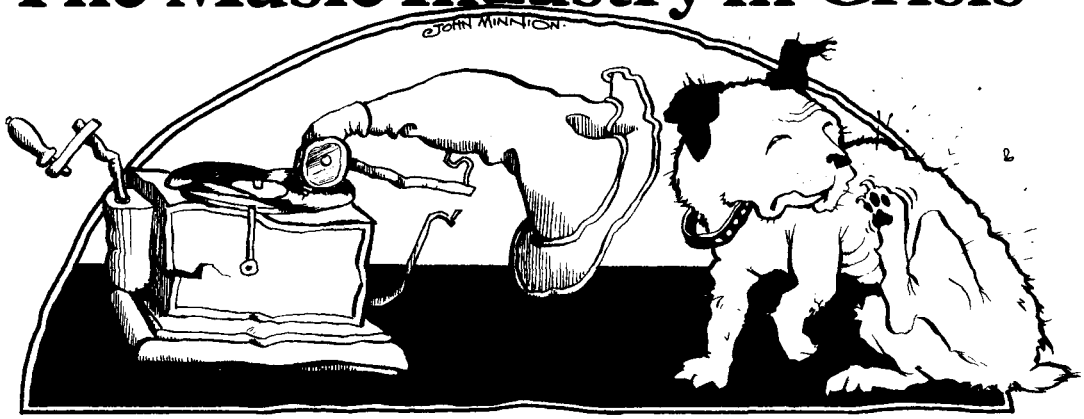
Dave Laing

The Music Industry in Crisis



Music, in the form of records and cassette tapes, is a major part of the entertainment industry. But the music industry, like the rest of the British economy, has suffered from the effects of the current recession. After a long period of uninterrupted growth during the 1960s and 1970s, sales are now in decline. During 1980, the sales of long-playing albums had dropped back to the 1972 level.

The profitability of the big multinational companies which dominate the recording industry has also been hit. In 1970, the largest British owned record company — EMI — had pre-tax profits from its music division of £16.4 million, representing 12.7% of its sales. By 1979, however, profits had fallen to only £1.9 million, a minute 0.4% of sales. The response of the industry to declining sales has been the familiar one of redundancies and mergers. EMI itself has ceased manufacture of blank tape at its Hayes factory, with the loss of over 200 jobs, and the American firm RCA has shut its record pressing plant in the high unemployment area of Washington, County Durham. Meanwhile, the Decca company has been taken over by the Dutch-German multinational Polygram and EMI itself was bought by Thorn Electrical. And, at the time of writing, Lord Grade's Associated Communications Company had put up for sale its record and tape subsidiary, formerly known as Pye Records.

Although the crisis in the music industry takes the form of falling sales of records, there is little evidence of a drop in demand for music in Britain. In fact, interest in music and involvement with it has grown in the last five years, especially among young people. The much-publicised arrival of punk rock in 1976-7 has been followed by a proliferation of new or revived styles of popular music, each with a considerable following. The problems of the record industry are due in large part to its lack of success in capturing this new audience for music, either because it hasn't offered them the music they want, or because the price of records is too high.

The attack

The attack on the British record industry's control of its home market has come from three directions: cheap imports, the mass production of recording equipment (cassette recorders), and competition from a growing number of small record companies specialising in the new 'post-punk' music.

The dumping of imported records in Britain is a side-effect of membership of the EEC. The 'free trade' provisions of the Treaty of Rome allow discs manufactured in Common Market countries to be sold in Britain. These records are usually surplus stocks of albums by artists who are not as popular in Europe as in Britain, and they therefore can be bought by British wholesalers at extremely cheap rates, to be sold over the counter at up to 20% less than copies of the same recording pressed in this country. One recent estimate suggested that 30% of the British market had now been taken by cheap imports from the EEC.

The record industry has felt the effects of the general availability of recording equipment in two ways: counterfeiting and home taping. As the term suggests, counterfeiting is the illegal copying and manufacture of records and tapes, which are then sold as if they were the real thing. Counterfeiting has become big business, and an estimated 10% of world sales of records and tapes are illegal copies. The main centres of production are in the Far East, although one illicit record pressing plant has been discovered in Britain.

> the British Phonographic Institute claims that its lost sales through home taping amount to over £1 million a day

The record industry in Britain regards counterfeiting as less of a threat to its interests than home taping. This is the widespread practice of borrowing records from friends to copy them onto blank tapes, and therefore saving the cost of buying them. It is obviously difficult to calculate the amount of home taping which takes place, but the record companies' own trade association, the British Phonographic Institute (BPI) claims that its lost sales through home taping amount to over £1 million a day. If correct, this would equal the industry's total income per day during 1980.

Home taping is in fact technically illegal under the Copyright Act of 1956, unless the consent of the owner of the copyright in the recording is obtained. The situation is broadly similar to that of the photocopying of printed material, and as difficult to control. Both are instances of the exploitation of new technologies by one branch of capitalist industry undermining both the market and the private property rights of another. Thus, the growth of the manufacturers of cheap tape recorders and blank cassette tapes inevitably means a contraction for the record and pre-recorded tape companies. Ironically, some of the multinationals, like EMI and Polygram, are involved in both sides of the battle.

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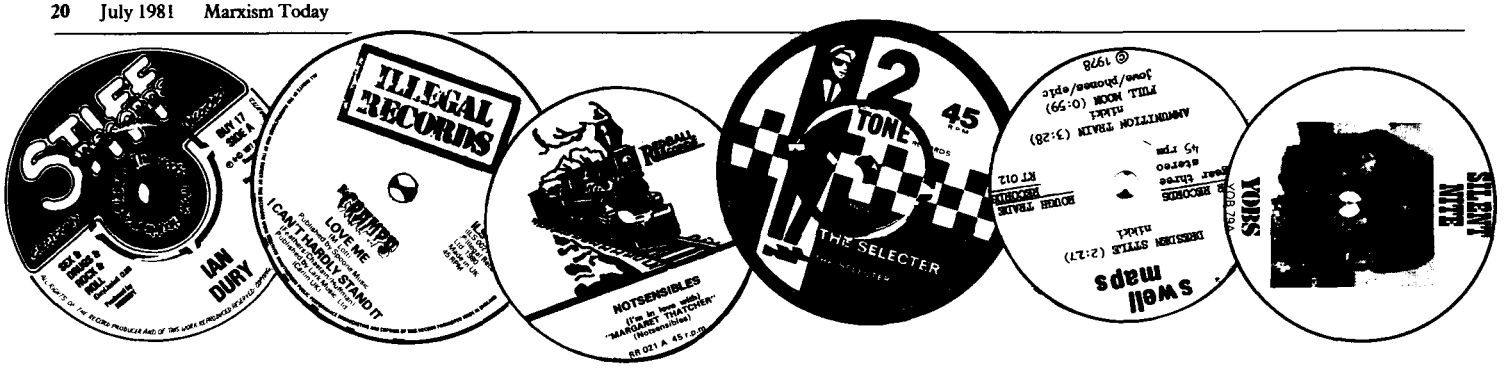

New small companies

The challenge to the established record industry from new, small companies is perhaps the most unexpected of the factors contributing to its current crisis, since, in common with other industries, it has steadily developed in a monopolistic direction in recent years. The majority of recordings sold throughout the world emanate from just four massive companies and their local affiliates. Two of these multinationals are American (CBS and WEA) and two are European (EMI and Polygram). Each is part of a larger conglomerate operating in other industries. CBS has interests in broadcasting, publishing and musical instruments, while WEA is part of Warner Communications with film and publishing interests, which in turn is owned by the Kinney Corporation, America's largest car park and funeral parlour chain. EMI is now wholly owned by Thorn, making up a group with radar, television and electronics divisions. Finally, Polygram is owned jointly by the German Siemens engineering combine and the Dutch Philips electrical group.

The dominance of the big four multinationals is due primarily to the 'vertical integration' of their activities in the record industry. That is, they operate in every aspect of the industry, in the making of the original studio recording, in the manufacture of the records and in their distribution to the shops. The vast majority of smaller companies in the industry are dependent on the big four, and, in Britain, RCA and Pye, for either pressing discs or distribution or both.

It is in one aspect only, the making of original recordings, that the multinationals are under serious challenge from new, smaller companies. These firms have in the last few years given an opportunity to virtually all the new artists in popular music to have achieved success. In comparison, the large companies have been unable or unwilling to sign many of the newer musicians and to market their work. However, although they have been outflanked by the new, small companies in the discovery of original music, the multinationals have in some cases bought up the contracts of the 'new wave' musicians once their recordings released by the small companies had begun to sell. Thus, the Leeds-based Gang Of Four, whose lyrics are Marxist-inclined, first recorded for the small Fast Product company. Soon afterwards they were offered a recording contract by EMI, which they accepted. To some degree, then, the role of small companies has not undermined the key role of the multinationals in the record industry. In this respect, they have rather acted an an unofficial 'research and development' arm of the industry, in a manner which is well-established within popular music. Probably the most successful popular singer ever, Elvis Presley, began his recording career with the small Sun Records of Memphis. Once the Sun recordings had established the novelty of his style and his potential, Presley's contract was bought by the multinational RCA.

> A series of newspaper and television revelations in the last few years have exposed the remarkable degree of sharp practice within the larger record companies

Multinationals still ascendant

Even in those cases where the new musicians retain full artistic control over their work by remaining with the small companies, these companies frequently rely on the multinationals for the manufacture and distribution of their records and tapes. The Coventry-based 2 Tone company is one of the best known and progressive of the new record labels, initiated by The Specials group whose multiracial musical approach has been very popular. But manufacture and distribution of 2 Tone records is handled by a medium-sized establishment company, Chrysalis, which in turn has a contract with the giant Polygram to have its discs pressed and delivered to the shops.

It is important, therefore, not to overestimate the impact of the new companies on the overall control of the record industry exercised by the multinationals. Nevertheless there are now two independently operated national distribution systems for records from small companies, and these companies have greatly widened the access to recording for large numbers of young musicians. A number of them also are organised on a co-operative basis, enabling the musicians themselves to determine policy and to make key decisions. In Manchester and Burnley, for example, existing musicians co-operatives set up to pool resources and to promote live concerts have branched out into the making of records. The Burnley co-op founded a record label named Snotty Snail and among its first recordings was the amusing 'I'm In Love With Margaret Thatcher' by a group calling itself the Not Sensibles.

But as well as those run on co-operative lines, many of the small record companies have a classic 'entrepreneurial' structure, looking very much like the kind of small business idolised by members of the present Tory government. Stiff Records, the longest established and probably the most profitable of all small record companies, was the brainchild of two energetic individuals who set up an autocratic structure to compete directly for markets with the multinationals. By the last quarter of 1980 they had gained 4.7% of the market for 45 rpm single records, compared with only 10.7% for the giant EMI. But even Stiff has a manufacturing and distribution agreement with CBS, giving that multinational a percentage profit from the success of Stiff recording artists like Ian Dury and Madness.

The character of these new record companies (which number well over 100) stretches from the Stiff entrepreneurial style through the co-operatives to a new form of recorded music adopted by some young musicians which opts out of the market system altogether. These performers distribute their recorded work by transcribing it free of charge or very cheaply onto blank cassette tapes sent in by listeners.

RESPONSES TO THE CRISIS

Apart from cutbacks and mergers which accept their reduced position in the market, the major record companies have responded to the crisis in the industry in three main ways: an attempt to 'tax' home taping, the resort to various methods of controlling the market which are illicit if not illegal, and

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investment in video technology which many hope will produce a consumer boom in the entertainment industries.

Having rejected the option of a full implementation of the law against home-taping (which on their figures might involve taking up to a million people to court), the industry next put its faith in research into an electronic signal which would produce interference on tape copies of commercially sold recordings. But this has proved impractical, not least because in principle any such signal could be 'unscrambled' by another electronic device. Once again, the logic of new technologies contradicts the forms of private property upon which the record companies are based. Finally, the companies have settled on a solution borrowed from West Germany. Instead of stamping out home taping, they are proposing to tax it by the imposition of a levy on each tape recorded or blank tape (or both) sold. The monies so raised would be returned by the government to the copyright holders in the music industry: the composers, performers, music publishers and record companies. At present, the industry is lobbying the government to introduce such a levy.

Manipulation

The fight to hold onto a share of a declining record market has led to an intensification of various practices designed to manipulate the sales pattern of records and tapes. These primarily revolve around the pivotal role of the best-selling lists of single records published weekly by the BBC and the British Market Research Bureau. Most radio programmers and record shop managers use these lists as a guide to what to broadcast or what to order. Since they are compiled from a small sample of record shops and this list is generally available within the record industry, it has been possible for unscrupulous record company representatives to organise selective purchases of records to get them a place in the Top 50 lists, or even to persuade record shop assistants to falsify the returns upon which the best-selling lists are based.

A series of newspaper and television revelations in the last few years has exposed the remarkable degree of sharp practice within the larger record companies: this is one area in which the small labels do not have the resources to compete. As a result, the trade association, the BPI, has made feeble attempts to police its members, but since one of those accused of involvement in illicit practices has been its own former chairman, this is rather like asking Rupert Murdoch to run the Press Council.

Finally, many individuals within the record industry are hoping that, as in the past, a technological innovation will stimulate new business and profits. The introduction of stereo recording in the 1950s entailed a vigorous growth not only in record sales but in the 'hardware' of new stereograms and other playing systems. Now, the expectation is that as video players and recorders go into mass production and fall in price, a new mass market will open up to eclipse the faltering disc market. At present, however, video is generally seen as a visual equivalent to the tape recorder, a machine to make recordings from television rather than for playing original, pre-recorded videotapes. While this emphasis remains, the growth of video use will produce another and greater problem of home-taping.

> offers an unprecedented opportunity for the dominance of the multinationals to be undermined

SOCIALIST STRATEGY FOR THE RECORD INDUSTRY

In the past, the Left has tended to ignore the organisation of music in Britain, even when engaged in vigorous debate about its content. Similarly, the music industry has never figured in either policy discussions on the arts or on industry in general. But the current crisis shows that there is need to prepare policies given that the initial principle of any socialist strategy should be to maximise the opportunities and the participation of both musicians and audiences, while working to limit the control of the multinationals over musical communication as a whole.

In this perspective, the traditional solution of public ownership of existing firms through nationalisation may well create more problems than it solves. In common with other media and culture industries, music, as currently organised, suffers from a lack of access to significant audiences for a large number of performers, who consequently suffer from chronically low pay. For recorded music, this raises the issue of the control of both manufacturing and distribution by the big companies. In particular, the provision of publicly owned record pressing facilities available to small record labels and individual musicians would be a valuable innovation. Similarly, some assistance in combating the distribution monopoly of the multinationals, is necessary, either in financial assistance to alternative distributors or in some statutory obligation along the lines of the French law on distribution of periodicals. Under this scheme, all publishers have the legal right for their magazines or newspapers to be on display in any town or village they request. Newsagents are obliged by law to stock publications on this basis. The result is that left-wing journals are available almost everywhere in France, without any censorship or refusals from the major chains of newsagents or wholesalers.

The Campaign For Press Freedom has already begun to agitate for a similar system to be introduced in this country, and its extension to recorded music would make available a much wider range of music in many smaller towns. In this sense, the music industry is one where socialists should be encouraging greater and more fair competition, so that all types of music can get an opportunity to reach a wide listenership. Some proper public supervision of, and sanctions against, unfair practices in the record industry would be another aspect of this policy.

The position of musicians

Finally, a socialist strategy for the music industry should strengthen the position of musicians in relation to the other organisations in the industry, notably the record companies and music publishers. It needs to be remembered that in the home taping controversy, many musicians at present find themselves lined up with the record companies, asking for extra remuneration for their work. The dilemma such a strategy would need to resolve is the clash between the working musician's right to a proper wage through royalties from the copies of his work sold, and the need to make music fully accessible throughout the community. One alternative to the industry's levy system might be a variation on the Public Lending Right system of payment to authors for books borrowed from public libraries: a sum of money provided by the government to be distributed annually primarily to composers and performers, in a manner similar to the sharing out of fees received from the BBC and commercial radio stations for the right to broadcast music.

During the boom years of the record industry, any radical alternatives for its organisation inevitably seemed utopian. But the present structural crisis affecting all the large, established companies offers an unprecedented opportunity for the dominance of the multinationals to be undermined, and for a strengthening of the position of the multiplicity of smaller record labels which will enable the widest possible range of music to receive a hearing. □

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Reproducing Royalty

Graham Trickey

The union of the first son of the German house of Hanover and Saxe-Coburg with the second step grand-daughter of the house of Barbara Cartland seems to symbolically confirm Britain's style of monarchy as the extravagant Ruritanian soap opera packaged by the media and reinforced by travel agents and souvenir-sellers.

The day before Prince Charles' investiture as Prince of Wales 12 years ago, Jack de Manio and other BBC staff gathered to record obituary tributes — a sensible precaution in case Welsh Republicans succeeded in dynamiting the prince and blowing a gaping hole in the programme schedule. Now, following the appearance of a replica gun in the Mall at last month's Trooping the Colour, all the media will once more be taking precautions.

The royal wedding, so eagerly awaited for a decade by royalists and so relentlessly pursued by newshounds, is finally with us, but with an added dash of drama and danger.

For a seditious minority, however, the possibility of the royal family coming under renewed fire from replica pistols will not be the most horrific possibility in a day-long bombardment of gushing tributes to royalty's ability to reproduce itself.

Just as the Caernarfon investiture was calculated and designed by the Palace to re-launch royalty for the 70s, so the latest ceremonial will be aimed to push Britain bowing and scraping toward the 21st century. On July 29, those with unshakeable devotion, iron nerves or no means of escape, will be watching, hearing and reading another triumph of the great bastion of continuity, stability and high moral values, or — putting in another way — greed, privilege, elitist power and militarist tradition.

But, even while the fancy dress uniforms are being pressed, the medals polished, and the Special Branch briefed for the great day, ominous changes are affecting the bridegroom's inheritance. The sun, having set on the empire, is now blacking out Britain itself. There are more hospitals and factories available to be ceremonially closed than there are to be opened. And, even worse, there will soon be no battleships to be royally launched. 'We are a minor power', Prince Charles declared last year, maintaining his family's record of mixing bold statements of the obvious with the usual stream of inanities.

Travel agents and souvenir sellers

With Britain short on money and prestige, some rebellious thoughts have been turning towards the informal, cost-cutting monarchies of Scandinavia. But the union of the first son of the German house of Hanover and Saxe-Coburg with the second step granddaughter of the house of Barbara Cartland seems to symbolically confirm Britain's style of monarchy as the extravagant Ruritanian soap opera packaged by the media and reinforced by travel agents and souvenir sellers.

Grand royal celebrations have been occurring at an increasing rate. The prince's investiture was nine years after Princess Margaret's wedding; then, more quickly, came Princess Anne's wedding in 1973 to lighten the gloom of over a million unemployed, the Silver Jubilee in 1977, the Queen Mother's 80th birthday last year, and now this even greater celebration amid the gloom of 2½ million unemployed.

Where the media build-up ends and the adulation of the subjects begins is hard to tell, but the devotion is less intense and unquestioning than, for instance, in the 50s. In the week of the Silver Jubilee, the Sex Pistols' 'God save the Queen (and her fascist regime)' topped the charts and not all the copies could have been bought by besotted royalists who thought they were buying the national anthem. Last year the now defunct *Now!* magazine published a poll showing 15% of Britons want a republic.

For this 15%, there are more years of torture ahead with the birth soon, if all goes according to plan, of a brood of royal heirs and the marriages of the Queen's younger sons. And, should the princes fail to oblige, the popular papers in hundreds of editions will be able to carry tales of their unmarried exploits. In between the processions and banquets the press periodically discovers that the royal family is only, or mainly, human; but then, perhaps in six years, there may be the most solemn moment of all, the Queen's abdication at 60, followed by the supreme royal occasion, the coronation itself.

But when the heralds shout 'the Queen has retired, long live the King' and Britain has a King Charles once again, the 15% of republicans may perk up at the thought of

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certain difficulties experienced by the first two King Charles. King Charles III may not be immune from constitutional problems.

By appointment

This time it may not be roundheads who are to blame, but those well-meaning centrist politicians who are trying to realign British politics, leaving the sovereign as the final arbiter on the claims of would-be prime ministers from three strong parliamentary blocs.

The Tory right wingers would not be the royal choice. In an argument with the Queen in 1979 over the Commonwealth Conference, Mrs Thatcher has already made it clear that there is only room for one real queen in Britain, Queen Maggie. But the other queen would not listen.

As for Labour, the leveller spirit is already spreading there. Even right winger Roy Hattersley has ducked out of the wedding. But the Social Democrats' David Owen will be at St Paul's. If political parties are ever able to have royal 'by appointment' warrants, the Social Democrats should be first in the queue. Their vague platitudes echo the sort of even-handed cliches with which Prince Charles himself lectures industry. 'Co-operation is the key to all this, and not confrontation. We are all in this together', he told the steelworkers' conference in 1979. A Social Democrat-style rhetoric also underlies E F Schumacher's *Small Is Beautiful* which is said to be a favourite book of the prince, one of the country's biggest landlords.

Still, it must be conceded that the politics of the current Prince of Wales are an advance on those of his predecessor who as the Duke of Windsor, remained pro-nazi for several years after it had ceased to be fashionable. In a lesser mortal it would have been considered treason.

Prince Charles is not afraid to trawl troubled political waters himself, claiming the post of Australian Governor General. The spirit of Ned Kelly is asserting itself, however, and with the Labour Party still smarting from the political interference of Governor General Sir John Kerr, the prince is unlikely to get his matrimonial home down under.

Fears of unrest in the lower orders has also disrupted the happy couple's plans to honeymoon in the Caribbean.

In the days when the forces of the Crown around the world used to despatch people with noose or bullet at production line rates, there would have been a swift answer to such rebellion. Instead Prince Charles will have to take his anger out on flocks of game birds and any other creatures that cross his shotgun.

Hunting and shooting is now the only

> 'We are all in this together', Prince Charles told the Steelworkers' conference in 1979

chance for the Colonel-in-Chief of the Parachute Regiment to engage in the traditional royal pursuit, slaughter. But at least on a memorable day in Austria three years ago he was able to achieve the efficiency of a walking abbatoir, slaying wild pigs, hares and pheasants to the dismay of his mother's RSPCA.

Another enjoyable shoot out took place this January, with a group at Sandringham including Prince Charles and Prince Philip peppering the car of a journalist — not considered in royal eyes a great deal different from a wild pig. On that occasion the forces of law and order failed to take the prompt action they displayed following the firing of blanks during the Trooping the Colour.

Double standards

The make-believe shooting in the Mall blew the dust off a formidable piece of legislation, the 1842 Treason Act (Part 2) which originally laid down seven years transportation for those who fire blanks to upset the royal nerves. No such protection exists for the rest of us, least of all against the disturbance created when a 21-gun salute is fired on the Queen's birthday. And should anyone actually consider firing a live cartridge at Prince Charles or the Queen, they could be sent to the gallows under treason legislation, a dubious protection unique to royalty.

British law and order — one law for the poor, another for the rich, and other laws specifically to protect the royal family — is at its most effective keeping the royal fortune from the prying eyes of the public and the prying hands of the Inland Revenue. A clause stealthily placed in the 1974 Companies' Act exempts the Crown from the compulsory disclosure of shareholdings. So the risks are reduced of the sovereign facing the sort of embarrassment that hit Princess Alexandra's husband Angus Ogilvie in the 'ugly face of capitalism' Lonrho scandal. He declared himself to be 'not against bribery in principle' — and the firm was not against it in practice.

Lady Diana is marrying into a family business worth £100 million (a 1975 estimate) in shareholdings and property; the same again for art treasures; half a million a year from the Duchy of Lancaster; the Civil List currently £3.5 million; plus another £4.6 million from the taxpayer for other expenses and some other expenses met by government departments; and Prince Charles' own Duchy of Cornwall brings him in £300,000 a year.

With such resources, royalty can afford to take a lofty attitude to the baser forms of commercial exploitation such as royal wedding T-shirts banned from displaying pictures of the happy couple. And under royal edict pubs have long since been told they must not call themselves the 'Prince Charles', though it will hardly matter when he ascends the throne; King's Heads up and down the country will provide suitable reminders of a King Charles.

In fairness, it must be said that, despite the great royal wealth, the Queen does think the less well off, if only to encourage them to contribute to the many charities which have royal patrons. The royal family itself is not known for making contributions. Protocol helps by laying down that royal males should never be seen with their hands in their pockets. Prince Charles is particularly skilled in keeping his hand permanently behind his back.

Sexual standards

Royal double standards are worst of all when it comes to royal sex and marriage. An outburst of frankness by Lady Diana's sister Sarah put her out in the cold. At a time when she was the prince's frequent companion she told reporters: 'I wouldn't marry anyone I didn't love, whether it was the dustman or the King of England. If he asked me, I would turn him down.' That was too much for the royal ego. Court officials were trying to build up the prince's reputation for sexual prowess and he was said, before his engagement, to summon women to his Buckingham Palace flat by late night phone calls.

The women were not allowed to phone him up themselves and had to address him as Sir when they were together — a detail which seems so absurd as to undermine the whole story.

In contrast, Princess Margaret received a flood of criticism from both in and out of royal circles over her friendship with Roddy Llewellyn. Her marriage plans in the 1950s to the divorced Group Captain Peter Townsend were similarly condemned. The war hero finally departed in 1958 saying unromantically that he could not expect the princess to forfeit her royal income by marrying him against the wishes of the Queen and government.

If sex outside marriage can barely be tolerated for Princess Margaret, it is certainly out for any future queen. In the prolonged search for a suitable bride, one well-tipped

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contender Davina Sheffield fell from favour when a former financee revealed that they had lived together. And, even more shocking for royal morals, was Fiona Watson, daughter of Lord Manton, who was revealed to have appeared as a *Penthouse* full-colour spread.

Far more alarming for some people would have been the prospect that the next queen might be Tricia Nixon, and the next king's father-in-law Richard Nixon. But this scheme of the President during the prince's 1970 tour of the US was happily a disaster.

Lady Diana also has solidly reactionary connections in the form of her stepmother Countess Spencer, a former Tory councillor. And, on the crucial question, her uncle Lord Fermoy has declared that she has a 'blameless past'. Debrett's, anxious to underline the quality and correctness of her breeding stock, even leapt in to announce that she was descended legitimately from King Charles II — a miracle as the king had no legitimate children.

Before handkerchiefs become too moist at the thought of the happy couple, it should be recalled that Prince Charles himself let it be known that good breeding stock was what the search for a bride was all about. Otherwise he would have been content to stay in his bachelor flat at the Palace.

Prince Charles himself let it be known — that good breeding stock was what the search for a bride was all about

Another blot on the perfect royal love story was the 'royal love train', as the *Sunday Mirror* headline proclaimed over a report that the couple had met at night on the royal train. The ferocious denials from the Palace brought relations with the press to their sourest ever. Even months later the *Mirror* was waspishly saying: 'Lady Diana's looks are hard to analyse without appearing rude'.

But the whole royal soap opera would be nothing without the media, and we can be sure that sweetness and light in great quantities will be restored on the wedding day and for days before and after it.

A peaceful day

Under such a battering from the press it will not be immediately apparent to the consumers that the coverage, along with the public reaction, will be in a lower key than the first big televised royal wedding — Princess Margaret's 21 years ago. Even the *Guardian* editorial hailed the event in verse 'for lo, the wished day is come at last.'

In today's more cynical Britain, the sugary flood of wedding stories will be diluted by great tales of royal courage by a family who, menaced by the sort of murderers who blew up Mountbatten, still brushed aside saturation security precautions.

Even so, the crowd watching the wedding procession will feel itself in turn being watched by a crowd of uniformed and plain clothed armed policemen. Paranoia will also be fed by the military presence, however ceremonial. After the blank cartridges incident at the Trooping the Colour, Lance-Corporal Alex Galloway said with loyal fervour of the alleged attacker: 'I thought about using my bayonet on him.' Fortunately he thought again.

Hopefully guardsmen riding in the wedding procession will restrain any similar impulse to deal with disturbances in the crowd by rushing in with sabres swinging.

Intending murderers would also be well-advised to restrain themselves and stay away in the public interest. On top of all the wedding froth, it would be the last straw for at least 15% of Britain if some bungling gunman succeeded in raising the happy couple to the status of living martyrs like President Reagan and the Pope. □

What's black and white and read all over?

here's a clue

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Discussion

Poland

Bert Ramelson

The year long ferment in Poland and the means and policies pursued to realise a stable, prosperous, socialist Poland are obviously of crucial importance to the Polish people. But not only for the Polish people. They are of great significance to every communist and socialist. They are bound to have a profound impact on all Communist Parties, both with regard to their own understanding of problems and the potentialities of consolidating socialism.

I therefore eagerly turned to Martin Myant's Focus item headed 'Poland', in the May issue of *Marxism Today*. Unfortunately I found it disappointing for several reasons.

I did not expect a full analysis, if for no other reason than the limited space allotted to a Focus theme. But at least a minimum analysis is essential to understanding any problem. Yes, there is an attempt at some analysis, but unfortunately the analytical element is superficial and can in no way explain the development of the crisis. That is why the author expected '. . . the immediate crisis could be over' once the Gdansk agreement was signed and was surprised that 'it had not worked out like this'.

The superficiality of the mini-analysis is that it begins with the Gdansk strike, and fails to relate it to a process of problems going back to before 1956 through 1970, 1976 and culminating in 1980. Only by ignoring the past was it possible to see the Gdansk events as a purely trade union economic strike which meant that once it had been settled by concessions to the workers' demands 'the crisis could be over'.

Support for the movement

Second and more seriously, the piece contains a series of inaccuracies, particularly about the attitude of the Polish Communist Party's leadership over the recent period. It contains distortions of facts which are easily verifiable.

It is on the record that very soon after the Gdansk events those members of the Party leadership who failed to recognise and accept their responsibility for what occurred, were removed. It was also recognised that what had occurred was a genuine internal and, to a considerable degree, spontaneous revolt of the Polish masses against the malpractices and undemocratic and authoritarian methods of the Communist Party. The revolt was not against socialism or the close relationships with the USSR and Poland's socialist neighbours.

I have read no speech by Kania, Jaruzelski or any other current member of the Communist Party's Political Bureau which has not stressed that this was a genuine mass movement of the Polish people, including Solidarity, and also expressed sympathetic understanding of why the movement developed and its major demands. They have also emphasised the absolute need for ending the past practices and methods, not only in state institutions, but above all in the Party itself, describing this necessary process as 'renewal'.

Of course in the speeches references are to be found to the fact that anti-Soviet elements at home and abroad are seeking to take advantage of the crisis to provoke maximum confrontation in the hope of turning the movement against socialism and the USSR. It would be strange indeed if that were not the case. But this in no way (they made it clear) basically changed the genuine character of the movement.

I have heard four Polish representatives from the current leadership in Havana, Prague and twice in Sofia at international gatherings, speaking to a not always sympathetic audience. Yet all of them stressed precisely the fact of the genuinely spontaneous and understandable eruption of the movement of discontent, and minimised as of not great significance the existence of indigenous and foreign provocative elements in it.

Martin Myant, however, in his piece turns the views of the current leadership on its head by selecting from the statements the secondary elements and ignoring the major and basic characterisation of the mass movement. This is misleading and harmful. It plays into the hands of those who argue that Poland faces a foreign-inspired and manipulated crisis, mainly an antisocialist movement, which they claim has been admitted by the leadership, and therefore it is beyond the ability of the Poles to solve the problem themselves.

Leadership as well as responsiveness

It is also in my view wrong to criticise the present leadership on the ground that it has reacted only to pressures from below for reforms.

Some of the proposals to be put to the 9th Special Congress, for ensuring a democratic Congress through secret voting for delegates, as well as for the democratisation of the Party came from the leadership as far back as March. These include a secret ballot for the Central Committee, the rotating of the leading positions so that no one holds a special position for more than two terms of office, that no leading Party official should simultaneously hold a government office as well, devolution of power from the centre, and changes in relationship between the Party and the government, as well as of the Party with the other two political parties.

Undoubtedly some of these reforms were proposed as a consequence of pressure from below, but surely positive reaction by a leadership to pressure from below, far from being wrong or a sign of weakness, is basic to the concept of democracy and should be welcomed.

There is ample evidence that, in the main, the current leadership is united on the main

proposition of no return to the previous status quo and the urgent need for 'renewal'. The most recent evidence of this is the leadership's unanimous condemnation of the 'Katowice Forum', which precisely sought a programme of return to past methods. This is also borne out by the fact that in the recent period those who are resisting change, whether at home or abroad, have started criticising the entire leadership without singling out individuals, and are indeed turning their fire against the whole of the Polish Communist Party.

Martin Myant also criticises the Polish leadership for its slowness in initiating and

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introducing these and other reforms.

This, in my view too, is doing less than justice to them. It is not evidence of resistance to reforms, as suggested by the author. It seems to me he underestimates the difficulties and complexity of the situation. Part of the complexity arises from differences that do exist within the leadership, but these differences are not on the basic issue of the need of 'renewal', but rather on the pace of 'renewal'. There are some who seek immediate, wholesale introduction of reforms; others who are afraid in the present situation of moving too fast; while the third and dominant group adopt a midway position. I repeat that in my view, the differences are about the rate of change and not change itself. It is to resolve these differences and at the same time endorse the need for change that the special 9th Congress has been called. □

Italy

Judith Bloomfield

Piero Borghini's informative article on the Italian political impasse (*Marxism Today*, March 1981) begs a number of questions about the Italian Communist Party's strategy.

Was or was not the so called 'turn of November 27' an abandonment of the historic compromise? The answer depends of course on what you mean by historic compromise.

In the persuasive definition Borghini outlines, of a convergence of intermediate strata, women, youth and the unemployed around the working class movement and its political expression in Communist, Socialist and Catholic collaboration, few would quarrel.

But was this the way the historic compromise was implemented from 1976-9? Borghini argues that 'a political strategy should never be confused with a formulation for government'. But how far did the PCI distinguish the two? The historic compromise was presented and enacted as *an institutional relationship with Christian Democracy (the DC)*.

Summed up in the slogan of 'national solidarity', the launching of the 'democratic alternative' in November of last year meant that the PCI no longer sees Communist-Catholic collaboration taking that form.

The gains of collaboration

What were the gains of this period of collaboration?

Borghini discusses the problems of trade unions exerting control over investment and the lack of an alternative industrial culture separately from the political situation at the time. How does he evaluate the historical experience of political collaboration? In that period the PCI accepted a series of deflationary measures — the so called 'austerity policy' for a number of social reforms: a law on rent control, which, in the absence of a massive council house building programme in the cities and sanctions against keeping property empty, has closed the market for rented accommodation; a law on youth unemployment which has not been implemented by Christian Democrat communes; the law on abortion, which was actively opposed by the DC and the important clauses of which, on sex education and the establishment of a family counselling service at local level, have been violated by most Christian Democrat communes (not to mention the abuse of the conscience clause by Catholic doctors opting out of abortion in the public sector, only to find their conscience clear in the private clinics). The law against terrorism can hardly be considered a social reform and while it may be considered vital for defeating civil atrocities, it gives the police dangerous powers of detention without bringing charges.

This hardly seems a record worthy of Communist sacrifice — in terms of loss of votes in 1978, of discontent at the base and perhaps most important of all the drift away of young people from the party's sphere of influence.

Progressive potential

Has the DC progressive potential within it?

Christian Democracy is a political alliance welded together by far more than anti-communism, the division of the world into blocs and the division and passivity in Italy. Its success also rests firmly on extensive patronage through the state, allied with conservative traditionalism in the South, collusion with the Mafia, and is reinforced by residual Catholic values of familial and patriarchal authority.[1]

Does the Left DC differ fundamentally from the rest of the DC? Andreotti's involvement in the cover-up when he was minister, of secret service involvement with the fascists in the Piazza Fontana bombings, gives rise to doubts. Not only has he been implicated in the petrol scandal but Freats, Moro's personal secretary, is being investigated for the private fortune he amassed at the time. Is the Left DC immune from the corruption, concealment and abuse of power which characterises their party? Hardly. Borghini, recognising this criticism, asks rhetorically why Communists cannot try to change political forces just as they try to change social forces.

This answer is not trivial but simply wrong. Social forces have an objective position in the system of production, social reproduction or civil society. With the socialisation of labour (eg, the mass entry of women into the workforce and the extension of the state) and the emergence of democratic movements, the breadth of political alliances around the working class movement are vast. But they exclude the organised bourgeoisie.

Political forces represent traditions, ideologies and organisational structures which insert social forces in a particular framework in support of certain policies. The fact that Christian Democracy is a mass party should not delude us as to its method of organising *and subordinating the Catholic masses*. The historic compromise of 1976-9 recognised the *integrity* of Christian Democracy, the exact opposite of Gramsci's concept of *dismantling* the 'historic bloc' of the bourgeoisie, and building a new bloc around the working class.

This requires the winning away of the

[1] Though the Abortion Referendum gives further proof of the weakness of the DC's moral grip.

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Catholic base, epecially in the South, from the DC — as has just happened in the abortion referendum and in the North with the joint trade union federation and divorce referendum.

What change?

What then has changed or must change?

If the DC did not fundamentally change in 1976-9 and has now even gone into reverse, what has changed? The PCI has changed — and is pursuing a democratic alternative to the DC. But hesitantly and without giving up hope of the DC, as Borghini's article indicates. Most important of all, however, are three fundamental requirements which were lacking in November, and are still either absent or uncertain.

Firstly a draft programme as a basis for discussion and mobilisation. Secondly a direct appeal to the other major Left party, the Socialist Party to enter into an alliance around this programme. This was partially rectified by Berlinguer's appeal to the recent Socialist Party Congress but has been hindered by personal polemics as well as objective difficulties. And thirdly an appeal to all the democratic *movements* and youth to press for their aspirations and realise their social goals within the democratic alternative.

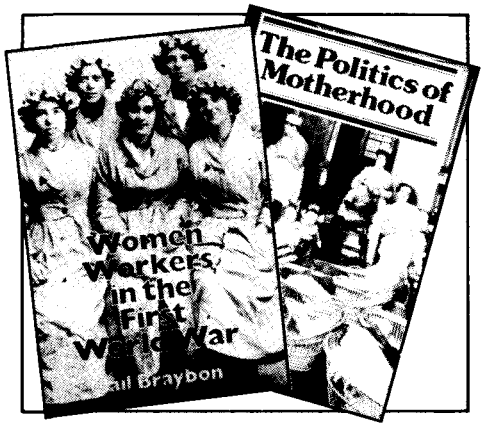
In the absence of concrete proposals and appeals, the democratic alternative, has been criticised as the Party 'going it alone' with honest and capable *individuals* of all parties and more, but hardly an alliance of organised political forces. If the Party is to become the reference point for all democratic forces, secular and Catholic, and build a real mass alternative to Christian Democracy it must see much more clearly and speak much more unequivocally about the alternative programme and its allies. □

We welcome Discussion contributions on articles appearing in the journal

Reviews

WOMEN WORKERS IN THE FIRST WORLD WAR
Gail Braybon
Croom Helm 1981 £11.95
ISBN 7 099 0603 X

THE POLITICS OF MOTHERHOOD
Jane Lewis
Croom Helm 1980 £10.95
ISBN 7 099 0259 X



> 'Our purpose is not simply to rediscover women, nor only to counter blatant masculine bias (though both tasks have their satisfying and illuminating moments).
>
> The knowledge of women which is gradually being compiled forces us to rethink and reanalyse the existing approach to history. Men and women interact as part of the same world; redressing the balance must therefore mean asking new questions of the whole, seeing sources in a new light, making new syntheses'.[1]

This is how a recent article in *History Workshop Journal* described the impact of feminist history. Two books about women in the early twentieth century provide excellent examples of the role of feminist historians in re-invigorating the discipline as a whole .

Gail Braybon's *Women Workers in the First World War* provides an important challenge to labour histories of the period in several important respects, not least in her theoretical approach. She does not attempt to derive the oppression of women in any way from their class position, but states unequivocally: 'The patriarchal system coexists with the capitalist system; the working class have always been exploited by the latter, but women have also been oppressed by men of their own or other classes in a multitude of ways'.

Other recent socialist feminist work has moved in the same direction. For example, Mary McIntosh's and Michele Barrett's work on the family wage has suggested that working class men must take responsibility for the family wage as a method of collective bargaining that has done much to oppress women and little to help the working class. However, they have stopped short of seeing patriarchy as a separate system of oppression, which is not in the last instance related to the capitalist mode of production. Ms Braybon, on the other hand, insists that patriarchal oppression cuts across class oppression. The political consequences of this — namely the isolation of working-class women from both their working class brothers and middle class sisters — are convincingly demonstrated in her historical analysis.

She also challenges the assumption that women's large scale entry into the labour force in wartime led to any long term improvement in their status. The extent of women's war work was, she argues, exaggerated. They were accepted reluctantly by employers and, with few exceptions, trades unions alike and were generally confined to semi-skilled and repetitious work. At the end of the war, they were easily driven back to the home or to traditional low paid women's work, such as domestic service and laundry work.

Women's role in the labour force cannot be separated from their 'primary' role as wives and mothers. The strength of this ideology is demonstrated both in the chapter 'Biology as Destiny; women, motherhood and welfare', and throughout the book in countless examples of employers', trades unionists' and media attitudes to women's employment — their concern with the effects of women's work on family life and their inability to reconcile the fact that women's war work, by raising their standard of living and providing mental stimulation, often made them better mothers, with the fact that 'a mother's absence from the home was automatically morally harmful.'

Ms Braybon defines her work as 'isolating one phase of a continuum' and therefore being 'relevant to the present.' It is certainly the case that many of the attitudes and problems she describes are all too familiar to us today: the use of women as a cheap reserve army of labour, the reluctance of many trade unionists to prevent this by fighting for equal pay, since this undermined the ideology of the male breadwinner, the ease with which such equal pay legislation as existed could be evaded by rescheduling the labour process so that women were never actually doing the same work as men.

[1] *Labouring Women*, by Sally Alexander, Anna Davin, Eve Hostettler, in HWJ, Autumn 1979.

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However, I think that the degree of continuity is exaggerated. As Ms Braybon herself says, women's own expectations were raised by their wartime experience and even if men successfully imposed the status quo in employment, some gains were made. For example, the vote was won.

The stress on continuity sometimes leads the author to miss nuances in an argument which significantly shifted the terrain of struggle. For example, while it is generally true that labour women accepted women's primary role as wives and mothers, they were transforming and questioning their definition of motherhood. The following statement from the feminist B L Gutching illustrates this: 'The mother who prefers to work may have quite as much mother love, and, although clinging less to the home, may very likely have a wider knowledge of life, a keener sense of citizenship than the domesticated woman, and this possibly makes up to her children in one way what she lacks in another'. This is not just a 'defensive statement', but a re-definition of motherhood which subverts its traditional meaning and extends the arena of struggle.

It is also significant in this context that the examples of progressive labour movement attitudes, from journals like *The Communist* and *Out of Work*, all occur relatively late in the period. They could therefore be taken as examples of progress that had been made in the war years.

In this context, more attention could be paid to working women's organisations such as the Women's Labour League and the Women's Cooperative Guild. The isolation of working class women, highlighted in the book, makes these early attempts to assert their autonomy in the labour movement particularly significant. However, Ms Braybon was tragically hampered by lack of funds and access to sources, and these organisations provide sufficient material for a book in its own right.

Jane Lewis's *The Politics of Motherhood* is located more in the genre of social policy than labour history. However, like Gail Braybon's book it is written against the tradition, rather than in it. Insights from both feminist and labour history, combined with thorough academic research, lead to a convincing alternative interpretation to the more orthodox accounts of the evolution of a benevolent system of welfare services.

In her analysis of child and maternal welfare services in the period 1900-39, Ms Lewis shows that the services offered represented only a partial response to the demands of women's organisations. The political implications of the high infant and maternal mortality rates were such that the problem had to be constantly redefined by official policy makers. Infant mortality was blamed on maternal ignorance and maternal mortality was seen as a specifically medical problem, to be solved by more medical intervention at the moment of childbirth.

This was partly a result of pressure from the medical profession, particularly from its most powerful members, hospital specialists, rather than GPs. More importantly, it separated maternal mortality from women's health in general, and evaded the directly political issues of the effects of poverty and malnutrition on the one hand, and repeated pregnancies and the demand for birth control on the other. Women's needs were met, only when they coincided with the broader economic and social objectives of official policymakers. Birth control was only granted in line with the government's 'informal' population policy — it was, significantly, available in depressed areas in the thirties — and economic assistance, in the form of family allowances, was finally given in the context of the Keynesian economic strategy adopted after World War Two.

Jane Lewis pays careful attention to the demands of women's organisations. She shows how and why one aspect of their demands, namely skilled medical attention on confinement, was singled out at the expense of better economic and social conditions and an integrated system of ante-natal and general health care. She discusses the contradictory nature of the welfare services, the fact that infant welfare centres and better medical care at childbirth were needed and welcomed by working women, but that the application of skill and expertise brought with it a loss of popular control and the disruption of local working class traditions. There is perhaps a slight tendency to romanticise the latter. For instance, the handywoman, who traditionally assisted the midwife and also helped with the housework during confinement, and was superseded by the trained and state-registered midwife, undoubtedly lacked medical skill and on balance probably did more harm than good.

Similarly, because of the need to redress the balance of those histories which stress the usefulness of welfare services, there is a tendency to overemphasise the disparity between women's demands and the services offered and to underplay the effects of working women's struggle. Women's organisations were an undoubted source of pressure on official policy, and played a part in determining the form of provision, particularly at local level. There is scope for more work in this area.

However, these are minor criticisms of an otherwise outstanding work. Both these books are superb examples of feminist history. They combine a scholarly command of the material with the ability to 'ask new questions' of the discipline. The outcome is an exciting and informative reassessment of the period, of interest to both professional historians and socialists and feminists generally. It is unfortunate that the publisher's policy of producing only expensive hardback editions may make them inaccessible to many of the latter.

Caroline Rowan

STALIN'S SUCCESSORS: LEADERSHIP, STABILITY AND CHANGE IN THE SOVIET UNION

Seweryn Bialer

CUP, Cambridge, 1980

THE SOVIET UNION SINCE STALIN

Stephen F. Cohen, Alexander Rabinowitch and Robert Sharlet, editors

Macmillan, 1980

ISBN 0 333 30868 9. Pbk £4.95

In Soviet political life the post-Stalin era has already outlasted the Stalinist age of 1929-1953. Both of these books help us to see to what extent the Soviet Union today maintains continuity with its Stalinist past, to what extent Khrushchev's shake-up had lasting effects, and to what extent the Soviet Union has settled down under Brezhnev into new, stable forms of organisation.

Bialer starts from the problem of continuity. After Stalin died, personal dictatorship gave way to 'stable oligarchy'. Rule by terror was replaced by an authoritarian style of government capable of flexible response to popular pressures. The role of the CPSU was enhanced in coordinating the work of the various increasingly secure, institutionalised and professionalised Soviet bureaucracies and integrating their interests. But much was also carried over, in particular the extreme centralisation of economic life and the police regime over culture and ideology secured during Stalin's 'revolution from above'.

A fundamental aspect, and cause, of continuity from the Stalin era to today is identified by Bialer in the present-day contingent of Soviet leaders. In the main they rose to authority in the Stalinist terror of the 1930s, being promoted into the posts left vacant by the preceding (imprisoned or murdered) generation of leaders or created by concurrent expansion in the Soviet apparatus. As a result, forty years ago the Soviet Union had acquired one of the youngest political cadre forces in the world. Since then this cadre force has filtered its way

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into the most senior positions, and has held onto them, effectively blocking the advancement of younger generations. Not only at the highest level (the 'oligarchy') but also in the second echelon (the 'central government and party elite') it has now aged to a point where massive generational change in leadership is inevitable in the coming decade.

To what extent will changed leadership bring changed policies? Bialer considers that today's leadership is marking time while serious problems accumulate, and that policy changes are also inevitable in the future. On the other hand change will probably not take the form of a destabilising crisis. The Brezhnev regime has met with undeniable successes, and the system over which it presides has considerable reserves of stability. Among the sources of Soviet political stability Bialer includes widespread social acceptance of authority, buttressing the authoritarian control systems of the state — a social conservatism crystalised by fear of disorder and of the bloodletting which has in the past accompanied Soviet political change. The regime has led the Soviet Union through the test of past crises, has successfully organised economic growth, has secured widespread participation of the population (both on the shopfloor and in the professions) in 'parish politics' and has maintained avenues of upward mobility for working families. It has responded flexibly to non-Russian national aspirations while preserving a special role for the Russian 'elder brother' within the Soviet family of nations, and it has successfully pursued Soviet great-power status in Eastern Europe and the world.

What are the factors demanding changed policies? Bialer refers firstly to the national problem, because the sharpening of some national differences within the USSR threatens precisely to undo the coherence achieved by Russian government of the Soviet great power. Secondly he refers to accumulating economic difficulties which demand more effective centralism combined with a degree of decentralisation. While no one can predict how the next generation of Soviet leaders will tackle these problems, Bialer speculates that the post-Stalin generation is thoroughly aware of the deficiencies and areas of backwardness in Soviet life. Motivated less by ideas of social justice or popular democracy than by modernising, materialistic concerns, they will prove less dogmatic, more reform-minded and more receptive to international culture than their predecessors.

Bialer's book is not necessarily easy to read. Its style meanders with deceptive grace around rocky outcrops of political science terminology, reflecting the author's involvement in debates within the United States academic and foreign policy establishment. A provocative and interesting section on Soviet foreign and military policy seems to stand by itself, not drawing much from or contributing to the book taken as a whole. More accessible to the less specialised reader is the second book under review, the proceedings of a conference held in the United States in 1978.

The first five essays in this collection show considerable convergence with Bialer's

approach. These comprise an article by Stephen Cohen (Bukharin's biographer) on 'Reformism and Conservatism', Roy Medvedev on 'The Stalin Question', a re-assessment of Khrushchev by George Breslauer, 'Changing Soviet Perspectives on Ledership and Administration' by Erik P Hoffman, and Robert Sharlet on the 1977 Soviet Constitution. Brezhnev's regime has successfully codified and limited the further progress of the de-Stalinisation begun by Khrushchev, but pressures for change still operate within the system. Cohen emphasises a long standing tradition of Soviet reform-mindedness, while Breslauer stresses a more radical anti-bureaucratic populism which he associates with aspects of Khrushchev's rule. Hoffman, however, emphasises the links between populism and authoritarian personal leadership, also a feature of the later Khrushchev period, and probably comes closest to Bialer in his assessment of the prospects for democratic reform.

Other essays by Arthur W Wright and Ronald Grigor Suny briefly mirror Bialer's assessment of the economy and of non-Russian nationalism as key domestic problems facing Soviet leaders. Wright's essay, pitched at a very general level and rather derivative of other Western writing, emphasises continuity in the economic mechanism since Stalin's day, and perhaps underestimates the extent to which modifications have been carried through in the 'command economy' without affecting its basic structure. Far more illuminating in this respect is Robert N Taafe's article 'Soviet Regional Development'; also of interest is James R Millar's assessment of modern Soviet farming, which presents a useful antidote to the pessimism usually expressed on this score. In the same spirit Suny stresses the extent to which Soviet leaders since Stalin have learnt flexibility and tolerance in meeting the aspirations of the Soviet nationalities, as long as these do not challenge the existing distribution of power. Like Bialer he sees here an explanation of the success of the Brezhnev regime in securing stability, but not a guarantee of continued success in the future if underlying national differences within the USSR continue in some respects to intensify.

Other essays (John Bushnell, 'The "New Soviet Man" Turns Pessimist', Peter H Juviler, 'The Soviet Family in Post-Stalin Perspective', George Gibian, 'New Aspects of Soviet Russian Literature') confirm the build-up of a ferment of social attitudes and pressure for institutional change, especially in Soviet women's challenge to patriarchal burdens.

Finally, how do these issues reflect on the international stance of the USSR? Charles Gaty, assessing 'The Stalinist Legacy in Soviet Foreign Policy', argues that here is an area of great continuity. Soviet foreign policy continues to seek peaceful coexistence coupled with the extension of Soviet influence to other countries: it continues to encounter the same frustrations, arising partly from irreconcilable conflicts of interest in the world, partly from tensions between the two competing goals. And it continues to undergo the same cycles of 'accommodation' and 'assertiveness'. The conduct of foreign policy, he argues, is little influenced either by internal factional struggles or by Western initiatives designed to influence them. Implications of this view (along with those of other writers such as David Holloway in the Penguin *Protest and Survive*) ought surely to be discussed further within Western movements for peace and disarmament.

In summary both of these books make valuable contributions to our understanding of the Soviet Union under Brezhnev, and contain indispensable pointers to what the future may hold.

Mark Harrison

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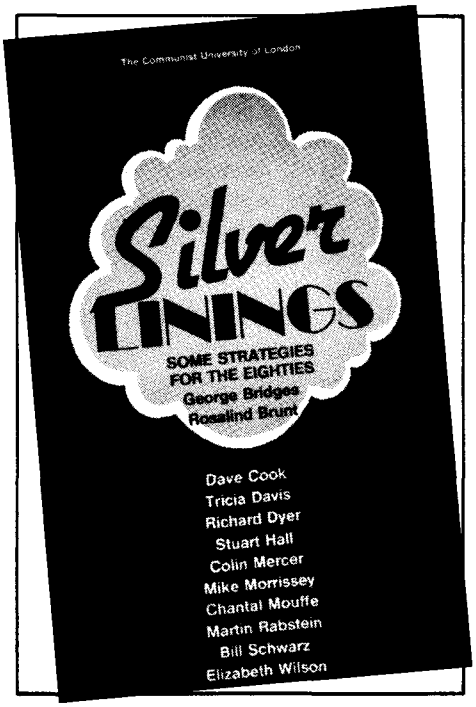
SILVER LININGS
Ed G Bridges and R Brunt
Lawrence and Wishart 1981
ISBN 85315 546 1 Pb £3.50



In these difficult times, a book with the title *Silver Linings: some strategies for the Eighties* will surely be pounced on like an England goal in the World Cup! Especially as it is a collection of papers based on talks given at the CUL of July 1980 — which was itself a bit of a silver lining. The editors claim that the title is not meant to imply 'cheerily naive optimism' — the contributors hope, however, to reveal, in the hearts of the dark clouds of this particular time of political heavy weather, 'a sense of continuous struggle — whether on existing or on new fronts and terrains'. In these struggles they are delineating, they are all themselves partisans, and it is this, along with the fact that they take up different positions about the nature and role of these struggles, that gives this book a real sense of purpose and drive.

The book is a development of the concept of the broad democratic alliance and as such makes quite a neat and integrated package, incorporating a number of perspectives — feminist, gay and black — and a number of strategies in important areas of struggle — the social services, the media and Northern Ireland. The final three articles are more general and take up some of the themes raised in the earlier papers.

And there are common themes which run through the book: the need, in the face of the populist policies of Thatcherism, for a renewal of the Left, and for the generation of a revolutionary practice and programme of a new kind; the need to build revolutionary consciousness by 'recognising, acting upon and linking reactions to different forms of exploitation and oppression, and not attempting to reduce all contradictions to the single common denominator of something alleged to be the unified class interest'; the need for the aims of various movements against oppression to be interwoven with those of the labour movement, while at the same time remaining autonomous. These themes are particularly important at a time when the Left seems to be floundering in its fightback. It is very tempting to revert to tried and trusted slogans which predate the broad democratic alliance (eg, the prominent Communist Party slogan on the recent unemployment march in Glasgow — 'Miners Show The Way!' — though stirring in itself and having a certain validity within the trade union movement, didn't have a lot of relevance to the isolated single parent in the housing estate, or the unemployed school leaver . . .)

That the broad democratic alliance (BDA) needs this kind of serious treatment and discussion there can be no doubt. 'Broad' is an adjective that has entered into the consciousness of the Left. 'Democratic', also, is a term that has been fairly well

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incorporated. It is the 'Alliance' part that has the Left at sixes and sevens. And so it is often easier to pay lip service to the general concept of BDA rather than work out its real implications.

Tricia Davis's credentials as a partisan were recently underlined when she spoke, on behalf of the womens group in Birmingham, to the People's March For Jobs when it entered that city. Her paper, 'Stand By Your Men? Feminism and Socialism in the Eighties', deals directly with the question of alliances. Drawing on a wide range of current experiences and campaigns, she airs some of the problems involved as well as drawing a clear perspective for action.

This is a wide-ranging paper, however, and very thought-provoking and competent. In many ways, it is a keynote article in that it takes as its starting point the *British Road to Socialism*, but proceeds to develop it in a creative way. Her passage on patriarchy is particularly good. Arguing for the need for a theory of patriarchy, she says '. . . patriarchy is not just an "issue" but a fundamental contradiction in society. The WLM, therefore, cannot simply be listed along with environmental, peace and solidarity movements'. Nor can feminism and socialism achieve a fitting together, as Sheila Rowbotham has implied, by emphasising the organisational principles of feminism 'at the expense of a fuller account of the anti-patriarchal quality of our politics'. That this question needs to be reopened and debated is obvious. I'm sure I am not alone in my experience of male activists who can still not bring themselves to the point of acknowledging that men are the instruments and agents of women's oppression, let alone discuss the processes by which this takes place. These men might be re-assured by the fact that, as Tricia says, '. . . we need a theory of patriarchy not so that we can discount the good and loving relationships that exist between men and women, nor so that we can point to the irredeemable hopelessness of the male species . . .' but 'so that we can understand how it is and do something to change the fact that . . . in learning to love men, we also learn to subordinate ourselves to them . . .'

Tricia Davis' paper puts the relationship between feminism and socialism in its current political setting, and, in a very practical sense, charts a path for it through the undercurrents of economism, the rapids of revolutionary feminism and the jungle of Left sexist practice . . .

Unlike this paper, which is an overview of feminist politics for the eighties, Richard Dyer's paper, 'Getting Over The Rainbow' is essentially an analysis of a current sub-culture. As such it is fascinating and illuminating to anyone who is interested in the apparent contradictions which seem to emerge from the gay culture. He opens up a whole number of questions about how a culture, which is defined by the sexuality of its members, responds to the fact. As he says, the women's movement has for a long time recognised the political importance of the body and one's control over it, so I found his section on body politics particularly interesting and would like to have it more fully discussed. '. . . "Body Politics" is not an idle phrase. It points to the way in which society attempts to make over every person into a cog in an efficient system that at the same time fragments any control or knowledge we may have over our bodies . . .'

Amongst the other goodies in this book is a marvellous analysis of the ways in which 'the media-sometimes deliberately, sometimes unconsciously — define and construct the question of race in such a way as to reproduce the ideologies of racism'. Stuart Hall, in his usual challenging style, also tackles the problems which arise when the Left tries to intervene in order to undermine these unquestioned racist assumptions.

Dave Cook takes on the job of pulling together the themes of the book and also of placing the Left in its current wider political context. In a well argued passage he states that a 'Labour government of a new type' is not something that will flow as a matter of course from an internal palace coup, but requires a significent shift in the political consciousness of millions of people. He argues strongly for the important contribution the Communist Party can make in this complex process of change. But to generate the broad democratic alliance that will be the vehicle of change requires new orientations on the part of the Communist Party and the Left. '. . . it is often people's consciousness of oppression, for example racial oppression, rather than their class exploitation, which is the key politicising factor. We remain at the level of cardboard cut-out politics if our analysis is just restricted to "workers" involved in the "labour movement" who are only interested in "class questions", and others who are only concerned with "peripheral" issues . . . 'The significance of the concept (of BDA) lies in its implications for achieving political change in the working class rather than as a description of the working class and its allies'.

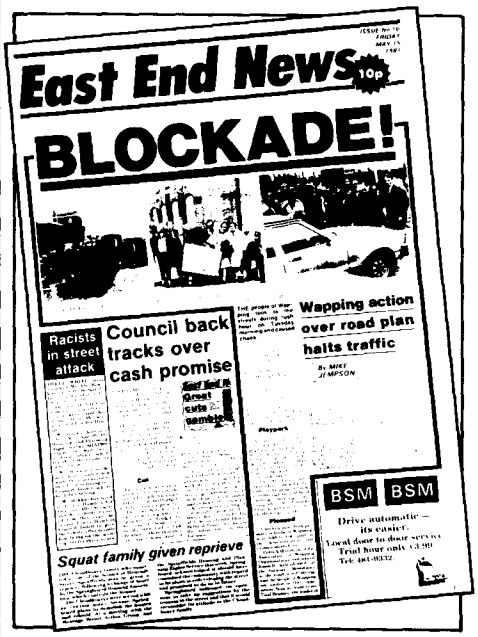
Ouanie Bain

Memoirs of a Socialist Businessman, reviewed in our June issue is available from Merlin Press, 3 Manchester Road, London E14.

EAST END NEWS

Zelda Curtis writes: A new independent local weekly paper, run as a cooperative and providing a focus for the labour movement and community groups of the East End, was launched in March this year. The idea for this paper, the *East End News*, developed out of the struggle of journalists sacked when the progressive *East Ender* was closed down.

Supported by the Campaign for Press Freedom and the TUC, this important venture is being watched closely with interest by those considering similar cooperatives both in Britain and abroad. The launch fund of around £25,000 was raised largely from national unions and local branches, from local tenants' associations and community groups, but also from hundreds of individual shareholders including many MPs who share the four aims of the cooperative: to promote the East End as an area for development on the basis of its peoples' needs; to promote better understanding between different ethnic groups in the community; to provide news free of discriminatory material against people on the grounds of race, sex or beliefs; and to campaign against the cuts which are hitting services in the area and creating unemployment. We have now gained over a thousand shareholders.



The need for new initiatives like the East End News Cooperative is recognised because as many as 85% of local papers are now in the hands of a mere half dozen powerful individuals or corporations and press agencies.

At the *East End News* our aim is to expand and create jobs, but with our limited funds at the moment we can afford only 8 paid

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Notes

workers. They are backed up by a committed group of voluntary contributors, sub-editors, graphic designers and administrative helpers. Local people from the many council estates in the East End offer their help in publicising and promoting their paper and local union branches support us with sales and advertising. The young people's page, *Revolution*, is a unique contribution being written and produced entirely by young East Enders themselves.

But while our launch period has been encouraging, it has now become obvious that we started with less capital than was needed, given that commercial advertisers will always use small firms, and especially new ones, as credit banks. This has created cash-flow problems. We need an injection of capital now to expand the paper, our readership, and our potential value to the movement.

We believe this community initiative, linking professional expertise with cooperative principles in a commercial venture which has already generated jobs and in the near future should earn sufficient funds to provide many more, is an important and significant one. Already we are providing a service to the labour movement, as witnessed by our production of the South East Region TUC's 'People's March: Official Souvenir'.

You can become a shareholder of *East End News* for £5, take out a subscription for £12pa, or come along and give us some help at: 17 Victoria Park Square, Bethnal Green, London E2.

CUL 81

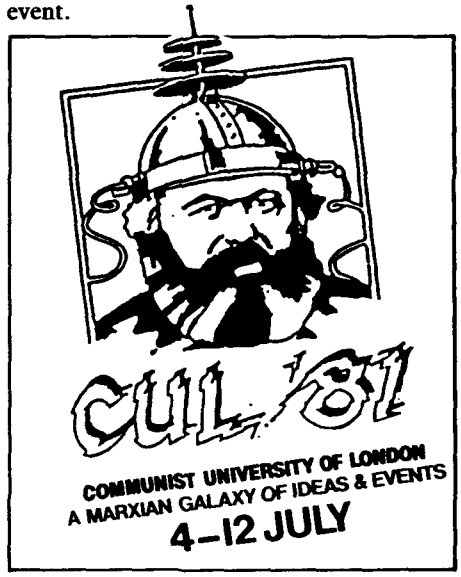
Teresa Scudder writes: The Communist University of London is now in its 13th year. Organised by the Communist Party it has become the major socialist event of its kind with an international reputation, brings together over 1500 people for nine days of intensive study and debate including trade unionists, students, feminists, gays, peace movement activists, anti-racists and others involved in the many different progressive movements.

Over the years CUL has changed in both content and direction. Course critiques are still an important part of CUL and provide undergraduates with a flavour of what it would be like to study their academic subjects from a marxist perspective. (This year's course critiques are on: Law, Sociology, History, Literature, Philosophy, Health and Welfare Studies). CUL also attempts to tackle some of the major problems facing labour and democratic activists in their political practice.

At this years CUL there will be a number of feminist courses; courses on the alternative economic strategy; the politics of unemployment and a course assessing the Peoples' March For Jobs. Journals participating in the event include: History Workshop Journal, Critical Social Policy, Socialist Economic Review and MF, and a new feature will be one-day themes on the Labour Party, peace and Ireland which will take place on July 11th and 12th.

Every night there will be music, films, cabaret with Alexi Sayle and debates on topical political issues.

CUL will be at: University of London Union Building, Malet St, London WC1, July 4-12. Registrations — both full time and part time — will continue throughout the event.



SOCIALISM AND NATIONALISM

Roger Thomas writes: The second conference of the *British Research Group on Socialism and Nationalism* will take place at Portsmouth Polytechnic between September 18-20. The theme this year will be 'Socialism and National Identity in Times of Crisis (19th-20th centuries)'.

The research group was founded in 1975 by a number of lecturers at Portsmouth Polytechnic but has now grown to include specialists from several British academic institutions. As well as the first conference, two seminar series lasting a term and several weekend meetings have taken place. Specialists from the continent have taken part in the work and the publication of a collection of essays based on the papers given at the first conference is now complete.

This year's conference will include papers on: Social Formations and the Study of Socialism and Nationalism; The Political Uses of Nationalism; Working Class Movements and Nationalism; The Russian Working Class and the October Revolution: Social and National Aspects; The Left and the Marconi Scandal in Britain; Welsh Labour and the Crisis of National Identity before 1914; The Communist Party and the Crisis of Czechoslovak Statehood 1938-1945; Perceptions and Uses of Nationalism in France in the 1930s; The English Working Class and the Crisis of August 1914; The Bund and the Creation of Israel; Protestants, Catholics and the Eclipse of the Labour Movement in Northern Ireland 1969-1974.

The inclusive charge for the conference is £35 (full board) though assistance may be available for the unemployed and others unable to afford this amount. Further details from: Conference on Socialism and Nationalism, School of Languages and Area Studies, Portsmouth Polytechnic, Wiltshire Building, Hampshire Terrace, Portsmouth PO1 2BU.

1981 CSE CONFERENCE

Andy Friend writes: The first six years of the 'Conference of Socialist Economists' conference focused on the nature of the capitalist economy, placing particular emphasis on the capitalist labour process and the internationalisation of capital. Recently we have taken more account of the state and socialist strategy and this year we want to add to the analysis a dimension that many members feel has been marginalised in the past. Much — though not all — of the CSE's work has examined capitalism and the struggle for socialism from the point of view that is predominantly male and white metropolitan. This year we intend to bring a more conscious critique of imperialism, racism and sexism to bear on as many areas of CSE work as possible.

The capitalist crisis is being experienced differently by the various groups within the working class — largely as a result of the way in which capital continues to create and deepen divisions between employed and unemployed, 'skilled' and 'unskilled', men and women, young and old, and between the working classes of different countries. It is too easy to see these divisions merely as superficial conflicts of interest within an objectively unified class, and by doing so lay the blame for them solely at the door of capital. It is necessary to recognise how we acquiesce in and sustain these divisions. It is only by doing this that we will be able to build uniting strategies as a basis for more effective struggle. 'Exploitation & Oppression — Rethinking Socialist Strategy' is the theme of the CSE conference to be held at Bradford University July 17-19. Further details and papers in advance from: CSE, 16 St Alphonsus Road, London SW4. Tel: 01-837 7244.

Contributions to *Notes* (brief please) are welcome. We need copy before the 1st of the month preceding publication.

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The Austrian Federation of Trade Unions (Austrian TUC) invites applications from experienced persons in the Labour Movement for a study tour of Austria (Vienna) August 20 to 30, 1981. Total cost (inclusive of flight) £250.

For the six remaining places applications should be made as soon as possible to: Director, Foreign Study Tours, Austrian Federation of Trade Unions (ÖGB), 21 Weoley Park Road, Birmingham B29 6QY.

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